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TRANS-ATLANTICS

BY
FREDERICK
W.
WENDT

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1. Fiction, American

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Transatlantics

By

Frederick W. Wendt

Author of "Ocean Sketches"

New York

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Wormser 20 Sep 1934

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A PROBLEM

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A PROBLEM

$$\text{Let } a = x,$$
$$a^2 = ax,$$
$$a^2 - x^2 = ax - x^2$$
$$(a - x)(a + x) = (a - x)x$$
$$a + x = x$$
$$\text{and as } x = a$$
$$a + a = a,$$
$$2a = a,$$
$$2 = 1$$

THEY had gone aboard late at night, and early the next morning the steamer had slipped away from her pier and plunged out into a rough mid-winter trip.

They? Well it certainly was a goodly company, for the ship was a large one and favored before many others.

One after another they crept out from their cabins and strode the deck with an unsteady feeling in their legs, and an uncertain sensation in their stomachs.

It was about ten o'clock when "he" came

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on deck ; a man of probably thirty, possibly thirty-five. His strongly chiselled face and expressive eyes told of much thought. Clad in a coat of ancient design, and a cap of doubtful color, he would not have aroused special attention had he not carried under his arm six large books, much thumbed and fingered, and a quantity of paper covered with innumerable figures and designs.

Two men in trim steamer costumes nudged each other and smiled as they passed him, and half a dozen more stared in turn at the curious figure, and then resumed their interrupted deck-walk.

He read the names on all the steamer chairs lashed to the cabin-rail and opened up for their occupants, and finally found his own. There was a quiet decision in every movement. At last he was comfortably settled, a writing portfolio on his lap, half a library at his side.

The deck pedestrians had grown fewer, and the strength of even these few seemed nearly exhausted, when suddenly a young girl appeared at the cabin door. A careless

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step just as the steamer rolled sent her flying out upon the deck and most ungracefully into the railing. She had fallen upon a coil of rope, and, unable to rise, clung to an iron bar.

The gentleman of many books looked up quietly, and then cast a glance to right and left over the deck. Not a human being was in sight, except the fallen girl. It was manifestly his duty to help her. He deliberately placed a bookmark in each open book, wiped the pen with which he had been writing, and started for the scene of disaster.

He had almost reached her, when the steamer gave another lurch. With a shriek the struggling girl fell backward into the coil of rope, now absolutely helpless.

"Why don't you, someone, help me?" she cried.

For an answer he put one arm around her waist, the other under her feet, lifted her out of the rope-coil nest, and deposited her in the third steamer chair away from his own as one would a doll. His cap had

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fallen off during the operation, and the shield had become torn. He calmly picked it up, replaced it on his head, and without a word resumed his chair and his books.

Miss Marion Leslie had been so surprised by the calm, deliberate, and unconventional manner of his proceedings that she had forgotten even to thank him. As she glanced over to his chair, she saw him sitting there writing, absolutely oblivious to surroundings, showing in no way that only a few moments ago he had rescued a young lady from a most ridiculous predicament.

Pretty Marion had scampered through life in a prim and proper enough way, but with all the boys at her heels as slaves, and here suddenly she had found a man who had picked her up bodily, deposited her in a chair, and a moment later had entirely forgotten she existed. The picking-up she might have forgiven, although she, a well-built girl of twenty, had felt as helpless in his strong arms as a baby. But forgetting her instantly, treating her as if she were a kitten or a dog, nay, worse than one would

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treat a rescued kitten, *that* had never happened before, *that* she could not forgive.

There sat the monster, as quietly undisturbed as if nothing had occurred, asking for neither thanks nor forgiveness.

A merry laugh came from around one corner of the cabin, and two young men, dressed in the height of steamer fashion, swung arm in arm in a brisk trot over the swaying deck. Their eyes caught those of the young girl, and with a joyous exclamation of surprise they stopped before her.

"You on board, Miss Leslie!"

"Going where, and chaperoned how?" broke in the younger of the two.

"Going to Paris, and chaperoned by Mrs. Taylor and—myself, Mr. Crane," archly replied Miss Leslie.

"Jolly! Come for a tumble on deck," cried Mr. Crane.

She glanced at the man-of-many-books. He had not even looked up; he had not even had curiosity enough to see who her friends were. Her mind was made up. She would show this man that she was capa-

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ble of moving about without his help. The accident that had placed her temporarily in his power was unfortunate. She must certainly have looked ridiculous, but that did not justify his way of showing utter contempt by taking absolutely no notice of her.

The monster went on figuring, writing, totally unmindful of the tempest his slow but energetic help and present forgetfulness of the same had created in a very pretty girl's heart.

Messrs. Crane and Dunby were surprised at the extraordinarily demonstrative behavior of Miss Leslie toward them. It was not her way to permit two gentlemen to pull her out of her chair, each by a hand. The sea air, so they reasoned, must have had a most exhilarating effect on the prim Miss Leslie they had known in town. But perhaps they rejoiced too soon, for when they and she had turned the cabin corner, the young lady declared that she could easily walk alone, and drew her arms from out of theirs.

Luncheon-time found Miss Leslie at table seated next to her chaperone, Mrs. Taylor.

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The chair on her right was vacant, but a card informed anyone who chose to inquire that it was reserved for Dr. John Brandreth. The seat remained vacant, proof positive that the Dr. Brandreth to whom it belonged was a very bad sailor, ill at the first meal-time.

At supper, Miss Leslie, prompted by a hearty ocean-born appetite, was again in good time, and again the seat of Dr. Brandreth was unoccupied when the soup had been disposed of.

Suddenly, while Marion was busily engaged in explaining to Mrs. Taylor that sea-sickness was imaginative, she heard the steward say: "This is your seat, Dr. Brandreth, please."

The tall, broad-shouldered man thus directed, took the vacant seat next to Miss Leslie, and when Marion lifted her eyes she beheld—the Man of Books.

The multitude of feelings and thoughts which, upon this discovery, shot through her brain would have puzzled psychology. Pleasure, resentment, and all the other

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workings of a young girl's mind gambolled in her pretty head.

Dr. Brandreth, on the other hand, was distinctly self-possessed, and quite content with his own company.

So passed one course after another, the fish, the roast, the fowl. But often great events have small and trivial causes. So here, the underseasoning of the fowl broke the ice. A salt-cellar stood before Miss Leslie's plate. Although she kept her face turned toward Mrs. Taylor, she knew the needs of Dr. Brandreth at that moment. But she talked on, apparently lost entirely in her subject. Dr. Brandreth waited patiently for a lull in the conversation. At last it came.

"May I trouble you for the salt?"

"With pleasure."

"Thank you," and he began to correct at once the mistake of the cook. "A chicken without enough salt might as well have its feathers on," he continued, more to himself than to his fair neighbor.

"Yes," said Miss Leslie, and then she

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felt that she could stand the strain no longer. "Do you know that we have met before, Dr. Brandreth?"

"You have the advantage of me there," he answered calmly.

"No, you had the advantage of *me* there."

"I?" He seemed interested.

"Yes, you carried me across the deck."

"I carried you——"

"Yes, Fate gave me no choice; I had to submit," she smiled.

"Are you," he gasped—"are you——"

"I am—the young lady whom you rescued."

Only a few minutes more and Mrs. Taylor and Marion rose from the table.

"Who is this Dr. Brandreth, Marion?"

"An unknowable and provoking sphinx, compared to whom the darkness of Egypt was bright daylight," replied Miss Leslie.

The next morning when she came on deck she found Dr. Brandreth hard at work in the same corner he had occupied the day before.

"Good morning!" she nodded.

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"Good morning," he answered. "You had better be careful, or Fate will once more throw you into my power, for it is rolling worse than yesterday." His pencil drew figures and numbers again.

Miss Leslie was studying the names on the steamer chairs, and at last discovered hers next to Dr. Brandreth's. "Fate has done so already, for my chair is next to yours," she said, almost triumphantly.

"I beg your pardon, what did you say?" he asked, looking up.

"Oh, nothing. I am afraid I shall annoy you if I sit down in my chair, which the steward has placed next to yours."

"Not unless you talk!"

"Indeed! I see there is an algebra; may I look at it?" she asked. He handed it to her, much as a father gives a plaything to a child to keep it quiet.

The two sat side by side in silence. At last she again broke their contract.

"I can't find it."

He looked up. "Can't find what?"

"An old trick problem we used to have

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at school, where by algebra they proved two equal to one."

He smiled. "There are no trick problems, as you call them, in that book. But I hardly think that even by algebra you can prove two equal to one."

"But you can," she insisted. "I know we all did it once at school, and even the teacher couldn't tell us where we were wrong."

"Marvellously bright girls, or a marvellously stupid teacher," he said.

Marion Leslie looked at him. He seemed so frank and absolutely honest that it was almost impossible to take anything he said amiss. She had only known him a day, and yet he spoke to her as if they had been acquainted for years. How droll he did appear. On his head, the cap with the torn brim; covering him, a certainly warm, but absolutely hideous rug, and on his hands a pair of gray woollen gloves that, on account of size, would haunt anyone's memory forever.

"I am going to find that problem some-

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where," she said, "and I will show it to you. It begins, I believe, a = x."

"That is a good beginning," he smiled in an amused way; "go on."

"That's just what I can't do."

"Hm! I am afraid I do not remember the particular problem you are speaking of."

"Do you know what they made us do at school?" she continued.

"Who? The extraordinarily stupid teacher?" he asked.

"She wasn't a bit stupid, I tell you; not a bit."

"Is it possible?"

"Well, then, they made things represent things."

"They made things represent things," he repeated. "I have no doubt you know what you mean, but——"

"You are really getting quite talkative—for you," she broke in.

"I believe it's catching," he said, "and there is no use fighting—Fate."

"I don't know whether that is meant to

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be rude or not. At any rate, I won't let you offend me—just now."

At that moment Mr. Crane and Mr. Dunby stopped short in front of Miss Leslie's steamer chair.

"You promised me a walk this morning, Miss Leslie," said Mr. Dunby.

"The professor seems to hold first mortgage on your lien," whispered Crane.

"Oh, of course, if Miss Leslie would rather stay," said Mr. Dunby; but Marion broke in with:

"I'll walk with you if I promised, and, besides, Dr. Brandreth will be glad to get rid of me." She jumped from her chair, this time without help, and disappeared, with Messrs. Dunby and Crane close at her heels.

Dr. Brandreth sat gazing at the waves.

"Extraordinary young woman," he murmured. "I don't think I ever met anyone like her." And then he took up his book again and began to read. But something must have been wrong to-day, for in a few minutes he threw it aside. "I don't think

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this ship's food agrees with me," he mused. "In the first place, I haven't had a *real* piece of toast for two days. Then the porridge is lumpy, and the coffee is vile. It has made me absolutely restless. I have never known a breakfast to have that effect on me before. A = X. That's absurd on the face of it. I don't see how in thunder she can make two equal one out of that. Great glory! I believe I am getting insane." With this Dr. Brandreth threw the books from his lap down upon the deck, took off his brim-torn cap, and let the brisk, cold ocean wind play with a head of hair that at college, long ago, had given him the name of "Curly Jack."

This day and another passed slowly. Miss Leslie and Dr. Brandreth met in the hundred different ways that people meet on shipboard. Now a word, then again only a nod, formed the extent of their intercourse. Miss Leslie seemed to be avoiding him. The steward had even moved her chair and lashed it to the other side of the deck. Mr. Dunby was her constant attendant, and

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Dr. Brandreth had become very restless. How bad breakfasts and lumpy porridge affect some men's constitutions! Dr. Brandreth spoke to the head-steward, and the latter promised that matters should be remedied.

That evening and night the ship ran into a violent storm, and Dr. Brandreth only succeeded in remaining in his berth by tying one end of his trunk-strap around his waist, and fastening the other end to a hook in the wall.

"Doors locked, sir. Dangerous on deck, sir," said the deck-steward the next morning.

A "nor'nor'-easter" had lashed the ocean into fury, and the large vessel seemed a toy at the mercy of the water mountains around it.

Here and there, on sofas and chairs, persons were lying about, with emerald complexions, and knees drawn close to their chins.

Dr. Brandreth had his books brought to a corner of the dining saloon. For more

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than an hour he attempted to fix his mind upon the work before him; but in vain. It was not the tossing of the vessel that made him uncomfortable; that only rendered things unpleasant, inasmuch as it endangered the inkstand and its surroundings. Then again the breakfast was not the cause, for the chief-steward had proved himself a man of his word; the toast had been hot and the porridge without lumps. A feeling strange and new had taken possession of Dr. Brandreth; a longing after something he knew not what. Just at that moment he heard a voice behind him. "Good morning, Dr. Brandreth!"

It was Miss Leslie.

"Good morning—good morning!" he said, jumping up. His tone was full of delighted surprise. "Will you sit down here?" he continued.

"I am sorry I cannot accept the invitation," she said, "as I am nursing Mrs. Taylor, who does not enjoy the motion of the ship at all. And besides," she added archly, "you know I talk a great deal, and

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might disturb you." With this she took a bowl of cracked ice the steward held out to her and vanished from the room.

"By George!" muttered Dr. Brandreth; and packing his books, drawing, and writing materials together, deposited them in one corner of the sofa; pulled on his enormous gray gloves; slapped the brim-torn cap on his head, and, climbing up the stairs, once more tried the door that led to the deck.

This time he found it would open. With the pleasure of a boy who has caught his elders napping, he passed out, knowing well that with the tossing of the vessel and the slippery, frozen deck it was a reckless thing to do.

He really could not discover what ailed him. He was not in the least disturbed by the tumbling of the ship, for he was feeling decidedly hungry, and appetite is the first to vanish when Neptune subdues a victim. He felt no pain anywhere—in fact, he had never been ill since he could remember. But how could two be proved equal to one?

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Ah! that wretched problem was at the bottom of his misery. It was that which kept him awake part of the night, listening to the thumping of the machinery, and noting the increased velocity of the propeller as it flew around every now and then out of water, while the ship buried her bow more deeply in some wave.

"Life's a queer thing," he muttered, clinging tightly to the cabin-rail, while the sea washed in big, cold waves over the decks. "I don't see why I shouldn't let go of this rail and——" His eyes rested on a sailor, wrapped from head to foot in oilskin, patiently mending something at the shrouds that the storm had torn during the night.

He was a misshapen figure this sailor, with kindly eyes, and Dr. Brandreth had had many a talk with him during the trip.

"Mean weather, Joe, to work in, isn't it?" said Dr. Brandreth, watching the blue-frozen hands of the sailor.

Joe looked up. There were few on board who addressed him in a friendly way.

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"Damn bad, sir; damn bad! M'hand's most froze off."

"Why don't you put on gloves?"

"Ain't got none."

"Here," cried Dr. Brandreth, pulling off his immense gray woollen gloves, rolling them into a ball, and then sliding them over the ice to Joe—"here, take these. I'm going in anyway."

Before the astonished sailor had quite recovered from the effect of what seemed to him a princely gift, Dr. Brandreth had carefully worked his way back to the cabin, fully satisfied that even his greatcoat was not sufficient to keep him comfortable on a day like this.

He had hardly entered the cabin when Miss Leslie came up the stairs, wrapped in her warmest furs. "I have come for a walk on deck; will you take me?" she said.

"I should like nothing better, but it is absolutely impossible. Besides, this door is only unlocked by mistake."

"So much the better. Will you take me?" she asked again.

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Dr. Brandreth thought he had never seen a prettier picture than the girl standing before him, begging him to take her on deck.

"Be reasonable, Miss Leslie. It is absolutely impossible and unsafe."

"But if I wish to go, and go alone?"

"I shall not let you, because I believe it dangerous. I have just been out, and assure you it was foolish even for me to venture alone."

"Ah, we will see," and she stepped forward and put her hand upon the door-knob.

Dr. Brandreth quietly placed his arm across the door.

"Miss Leslie, you are not acting sensibly."

"What right have you to keep me from doing what I wish to do?" I *will* go out."

"You *shall* not."

"No man has ever yet said to me, 'You *shall* not.' One would think you were my father or my brother."

"I am acting as I would wish another

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man to act, were my sister as headstrong and reckless as you."

Without an answer or a look she left him. What had he done? Refused to take this girl out on deck when he would have given anything to do it. But he was right, right and—miserable. There really must be something seriously the matter with him. Two equal to one! His mind must be weakening. He had heard of cases where overstudy and overwork had produced curious maladies of the intellect, unhappiness with really no definable reason. Two could not possibly be equal to one, because——

"Oh, he was so frightened, you know, and I am sure you are ever so much braver." It was Miss Leslie's voice, and at her side was Mr. Dunby, looking very pale and uncomfortable.

"Do you really think it is safe? I—I——" ventured Mr. Dunby.

"Come," she said, "I don't like cowards!"

Dr. Brandreth bit his lip. He knew the rebuke was meant for him. It stung like a

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blow. Then she believed him to be a coward, when it had been for *her* and not for himself that he had refused.

The door fell to with a violent crash. She had carried her point.

"What a fool I've been," muttered Dr. Brandreth; "she has gone in spite of me." And then he stared at the warm plaid rugs that were hanging over the baluster, unused. There were her rug and his, peaceably side by side just as on the day, it seemed years ago to him now, when she had told him she could prove two equal to one.

In the meanwhile Miss Leslie and Mr. Dunby were clinging to the hand-rail along the cabin at the identical spot where Dr. Brandreth had been before. The sailor was still working at the rigging.

Miss Leslie noticed his gloves.

"Where did you find those?" she asked.

"I didn't find 'em. They were given to me by the best feller I ever met aboard, and I've been at the bloomin' business for a devil of a while. There," he added, "wonder how long it'll hold." He viewed his

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work with admiration, and then rose from his kneeling position. "I advise you two to go in. It's dangerous out here," he added, in the half-pitying half-contemptuous way that the sailor professes for those who live upon the land.

"The gentleman who gave you the gloves told me that, too, but *he* wasn't hurt, so I was going to try myself," said Miss Leslie. She did not even confess to herself that she was beginning to be frightened.

"You two, and *him!*" grinned Joe. "Well, there ain't no danger for *him*, that's true. He's strong, and I guess a wave'd have a pretty tough time knockin' *him* off his pins. But you and yer seasick friend—why *he* could carry both of yer in together." After this impolite speech Joe worked his way from rope to rope, and disappeared around the cabin corner.

Swish—sh—sh. A tremendous wave had washed on deck, and poor Marion and Mr. Dunby were drenched to the bone. It seemed that from that wave the vessel could not recover her equilibrium. To let go of

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the railing to which they were clinging would have meant putting themselves into absolute danger of being thrown overboard, so violent had the motion become.

Dr. Brandreth had remained in the cabin, undetermined what to do. The last tremendous wave decided him. He could not stay where he was while Marion Leslie foolishly exposed herself to danger outside. He would bring her back whether she wished it or not, and take the consequences of her wrath.

But when he had succeeded in opening the door, he saw no longer the defiant Miss Leslie. A drenched, shivering girl, looking in vain for help to an abject figure that had been Mr. Dunby, met his gaze.

There was no smile of triumph on Jack Brandreth's face. He saw that both were in danger of breaking hand and foot if they moved or tried to walk unaided, over the slippery deck, to the door thirty feet away. In an instant he had reached them, and pulling off his large coat, threw it over Marion's shoulders just in time to save her from a

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second drenching. But the wave had its revenge; for it struck him in her stead, wetting him through and through.

Half carrying, half leading, he brought the shivering girl to the door, followed by Mr. Dunby.

Just as he had carefully deposited his precious burden out of harm's way, another wave threw the ship on her beam ends.

In helping her he had been forced to let go of any support for himself, and the unexpected lurch threw him violently to the deck. Unable to gain a foothold on the slippery planks, he shot headfirst into the railing.

He was up again in an instant, fearful that, though inside the cabin, Miss Leslie might have come to grief. There she was, on the floor, wrapped in his big coat, which had shielded her like a cushion from any hurt.

"You had better get your wet things off as fast as you can," said he, forgetting that he himself was drenched to the bone by the icy water.

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"I'm so cold and stiff, I can't move," she answered plaintively.

"What is the number of your room?" he asked.

"Forty-seven."

Without another word he lifted her from the floor in his arms.

"Please don't," she remonstrated, as he started down the steps with his burden. "What will people think?"

"I don't care what they think," he said; "you have to get to your cabin."

She looked up gratefully into his face; and then with a cry: "You have cut your forehead. Oh, I am so sorry."

"Never mind me," he answered almost brusquely, to hide from her that his teeth were beginning to chatter. "What we want is to get *you* warm as soon as possible."

He had reached her room and deposited her on the sofa, rung the bell for the stewardess, and left before Marion had been able to utter a word of thanks. Then he made his way to the doctor's cabin, and sent that

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worthy official scampering to Miss Leslie's stateroom.

And now for the first time Dr. Brandreth felt that his right hand pained him badly, and that blood was beginning to flow freely from the cut in his forehead. Arriving at his own stateroom, he ordered the stiffest and hottest grog that could be made, and tearing off his wet clothes as best he could with the hand that had not been disabled, he wrapped himself up in a blanket and lay down on the sofa to review the situation.

Slowly the day passed to everyone aboard, but as the hours wore on, the ocean quieted down. During the afternoon the people reappeared one by one, and though the racks were still on, the supper table presented quite a festive appearance with but few of the well-known faces missing. Even Miss Leslie had come, none the worse for her cold morning bath on deck with its exciting circumstances.

This time she would thank Dr. Brandreth with all her heart for his help, and ask him to forgive her. She could not recollect that

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she had ever before asked any man to forgive her. Then she remembered that she had called him a coward, not to his face, it is true, but she had meant it. How mean and small she must have seemed to him. But she would explain it all when he came.

One course followed another, but Dr. Brandreth's seat remained vacant. The people opposite began cracking jokes at his expense, and Miss Leslie saw even Mr. Dunby pointing to the vacant chair with a sarcastic smile. She felt a deep resentment to them all, mingled with a fear that something might have happened. Why should he stay away from supper if all were right? And then she remembered her conduct of this morning. Yes. That might be the reason for his absence. He was offended, and had asked for another seat at table.

She looked around, and again met Mr. Dunby's gaze. He must have misunderstood, for he sent her a card by the steward. The latter had considerable trouble in finding the lady designated by Mr. Dunby, for he presented the card to a young married

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woman, who read it, discovered the mistake, smiled, and handed it to Marion.

The color had risen to Miss Leslie's face, and without reading the card she tore it to pieces. Suddenly she heard a few snatches of conversation near her.

"It's a confounded shame to be disabled like that. Just at the end, too. They say he was sure of taking the prize. But of course that settles it."

"And when does the competition take place in Paris?"

"To-day a week."

"He'll be able to write and draw again by that time."

"Not a bit of it. The doctor says there is a chance that it may be healed in a few months, but probably he will never be able to use his right hand again comfortably. He did something to some bone in the wrist."

"Poor fellow. But what a fool he was to go out on deck a day like this. Cut his forehead badly, too."

Marion had become pale. She rose from

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the table saying that she was going to look after Mrs. Taylor, but instead she went to her own stateroom and cried as if her heart would break.

Poor Marion did not sleep during the night that followed, and when she paid her morning visit to Mrs. Taylor the next day, she turned her face away from the bright shaft of sunlight, that came through the porthole for the first time on the voyage, so that her red eyes and the dark rings beneath them should escape notice.

It was indeed a beautiful winter day. The ocean flashed smooth as glass, with the sun shining upon it, and glistening in the coating of ice that covered the rigging and every rope from stem to stern.

Messrs. Dunby and Crane had discovered musical talent in the steerage, and had brought up a bagpipe and a flute, to the delight of those who were aching for a dance. It would have been hard to find a merrier scene.

In a stateroom just below the dancing couples, a tall, strong man was lying in his

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berth, absolutely helpless and unable to move. He watched the sunshine and listened to the shrill music and the shuffling feet. He wondered whether Marion Leslie was there enjoying herself.

Two glasses on the cabin bureau reflected the sunlight and threw two bright dancing spots on the wall. And sometimes they merged into one and then separated again. "Two equal to one," muttered Jack Brandreth, and smiled. But the smile died away quickly, and he bit his lip to keep from groaning aloud, for he had attempted to move the wounded arm.

Then his thoughts flew again to his work. He had been on his way to collect fresh laurels and honors in France. A prize for which the world competed had been offered in Paris. He had all but finished the task set, and now just before he could put on the final stroke, this accident had come and placed him on his back, flat as a turtle.

Not once did he think of Marion's recklessness as the cause of his distress; in fact, when the doctor had asked him point blank

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how he could have been such a fool as to let Miss Leslie go on deck that morning, he admitted that he ought to have prevented it.

Marion was not among the dancers he heard above his head. She was in her cabin trying in vain to fix her attention upon the book before her.

She heard someone coming along the passage and jumped up. It was the ship's doctor, an elderly, kindly man, to whom she had confided the whole wretched affair and her part in it.

And the doctor thought more highly of the young fellow who lay in his room alone, groaning with pain, but never by a word accusing the girl who was the cause.

So two days passed. The ocean had remained smooth as a lake, and everyone, even Mrs. Taylor, joined the ship's company in the reëstablished gayety. One would hardly have recognized the dining saloon filled at meal-times with merry passengers, and the decks lined with steamer chairs, as the same of two days ago.

But there were a few on board who were

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not with the rest. Marion Leslie spent most of her time reading and writing. Mr. Dunby had ventured to make remarks about Dr. Brandreth, but he had been so severely rebuked by Miss Leslie that he wisely refrained from touching upon the subject again. The short time had worked a great change in the young girl; but not in her alone. Dr. Brandreth, who for the last ten years had lived only for his books and studies, had had two long days and two longer nights to reflect.

The result of these reflections was an utterly illogical self-condemnation. He had let books supply the place of people, and allowed the busts of Socrates and Aristotle to arouse more enthusiasm than the prettiest head of any maiden living. He read no longer to enjoy, but to learn; his object in living had been to become wiser than the rest, not happier. For the last ten years he had smiled at what he termed frivolity, and now at thirty-two he was fast hastening on to become a confirmed cynic. The wild, enthusiastic feelings of "Curly Jack"

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had been suffocated under books, and the old pleasures driven out.

And yet one grim satisfaction he felt. He had not made an entire failure of life, in the life of learning, for he held a position in the intellectual world which many had often told him, for his age, was remarkable. Older men came and consulted him, younger men looked up to him. And yet at this moment he felt that he would gladly give it all to receive back in return the old romping spirit; give it all for a year of the time when he had taken fervent interest in the people around him, before he had built up the wall of books and learning between himself and the world at large.

He lived his college days over again, when not a fortnight passed without finding him in some mischief; when at football he had rushed through the lines. Oh! involuntarily the right arm had followed the thought, and with a groan of pain the old pictures vanished.

A new one came in their stead. The picture of a girl, a willful, pretty girl, tumbling

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all in a heap into a coil of rope; a girl who with flashing eyes had cried: "No man has ever yet said to me, '*You shall not*';" a girl who had given to him two problems to solve, how two could equal one, and—herself. Then his thoughts wandered farther and farther away, and he fell asleep.

But Brandreth's constitution was a hale and hearty one; and the ship's doctor had added to his advice to lie still and motionless the promise that the night before reaching port he would tie Dr. Brandreth up in bandages and allow him to shake hands, left hand of course, with friends.

That time had now arrived. The steward had been summoned, and dressed Jack Brandreth carefully. One sleeve of the large ulster hung empty and limp, for the arm was tied and bandaged underneath the coat. There was a curious, happy smile on Jack Brandreth's face as he once more put on the old brim-torn cap. It seemed to him as if ages had passed since he had stepped through the door into his stateroom.

There is no need to record the conversa-

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tion when Miss Leslie and Dr. Brandreth met; in fact, no one was present. It happened in the ship's library, just before supper, at a moment when all the people were below, dressing for the last meal aboard. Nor is there any necessity of repeating any of the unpleasant remarks Messrs. Dunby and Crane made to each other privately in regard to Miss Leslie and Dr. Brandreth.

The supper, during which the latter depended a great deal on the former's help, was over. People had taken up their various evening entertainments—their cards, their music, or their books. The steamer, with scarcely any motion, resembled a large floating hotel. Dr. Brandreth and Miss Leslie had joined a card-party, and to the amusement of the others had played a "hand" together. As the evening wore on, the ship's doctor made his appearance and suggested that his patient needed rest.

"I had almost forgotten I was still under your command, doctor," replied Jack Brandreth. "I'll go on one condition: that you and Miss Leslie take me out for a breath

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of fresh air on deck. Come now, don't refuse, it's the last night."

The doctor looked at Miss Leslie, and as she nodded assent, Jack Brandreth's request was granted.

Arrived on deck the doctor recollected that he had forgotten something below, and left his patient in Miss Leslie's charge. What the two said to each other there alone on deck nobody but they will probably ever know, but it must have been important, for it took a long while.

Mrs. Taylor grew quite anxious when four bells struck and the clock hand pointed to ten, and still Marion had not put in an appearance.

At last she came, flushed and rosy.

"Why, child, what possessed you to stay on deck so late? Your coat is entirely covered with snow."

"With snow, Mrs. Taylor?"

"Why, Marion!" exclaimed Mrs. Taylor, "you don't even know it has been snowing?" and she began brushing the small white flakes from the fur, and wondered

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at a curious phenomenon. There was a strip about six inches wide extending from Marion's right shoulder diagonally across on the back of the coat, on which not a flake had settled.

"Oh, I am so happy, Mrs. Taylor," the girl cried, throwing both her arms around the older woman's neck.

And Mrs. Taylor that moment understood the phenomenon. The problem had been solved.

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THE MAKING OF A MAN

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THE MAKING OF A MAN

It's all about the making of a man, and there isn't a woman in it—not one.

He had a beautiful creed, had Mortimer Hatton. "I'm all right. So is the world. That's all." And by "the world" he meant the men and women he met and spoke to. He had money, and all his people were dead.

The guardian to whom Mortimer had been bequeathed, regarded this legacy as one would the sudden gift of a Newfoundland dog; in a few months, however, finding that the puppy had grown into an elephant, he handed him the unnecessarily large fortune and washed his hands of him.

Freed from every restraint, young Mortimer now bent his mind to the destruction of his fortune—and succeeded. He never looked further ahead than the next meal, and was frightened and surprised when one

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morning his attorney informed him that his five-figured bank account had run down to a mere nothing. Then he nursed in his mind an idea that he might as well be dead, a notion that invariably springs from a pampered hothouse existence. The guardian having died some time before, Mortimer had sense enough to go to an old friend of his father's and pour out a full confession, adding highly seasoned remarks about the world at large and about himself.

The white-haired man looked at the boy. "I know a captain," he said, "who'll help you, my boy." No moralizing, no preaching, only the name of a ship and her captain. Mortimer had come for advice and—to resist it to the death. He had received a good cigar, an excellent glass of wine, and a letter of introduction to a freight-ship's captain.

From the bridge Mortimer Hatton could see the land slipping slowly away. Behind him stood the captain, a blunt, bluff Goliath of a man, to whom he had taken a fancy

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from the moment he had presented the letter from his father's friend.

The captain had read the letter carefully, put a heavy hand on Mortimer's shoulder, and looking him straight in the eyes had said: "So you've been sailing before the wind, and you've tired of it? Ever seen a ship fightin' *into* the wind double-reefed? Takes a man at the tiller then. What *you* want is cross seas, and a shakin' up of your inwards, and we'll make a man of you, sir. Trouble'll do it, and a storm sometimes."

The captain had pretty correctly ballasted ideas on all subjects connected with a ship, and also on human nature in its various stages of development. Over a quarter of a century's experience had taught him that while some sins of mankind are best cured with the buckle-end of a strap, other failings yield more quickly when carefully dosed with hot punch. By applying either the one or the other remedy judiciously, he held the respect and at the same time the love of every crew he shipped.

The captain's idea on the bringing-up of

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boys was: "Give a boy more money than he absolutely needs, and you've bought him a parquet seat in hell. He will stay in his seat as long as his liver's in order. As soon as that's gone the boy climbs in over the footlights to perdition. The trouble is to yank him out by the collar into the open in time."

At first Mortimer Hatton walked around like a forsaken spirit. Everyone was polite; but no one flattered him, and he realized that the ship would sail on in precisely the same way if he were sewed up in sail-cloth and tossed in among the white-caps. This made him angry, for it placed him in worth below the lowest sailor on board. The crew were short-handed, and the loss of one man would mean that some piece of brasswork would remain unpolished or some sail flap a few minutes longer in the wind.

He was much on the bridge with the captain, and they had many talks together on various subjects. Slowly the mists seemed to rise from Mortimer's city and society befogged brain. Something—an ugly feel-

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ing first—had gripped him by the throat, and showed him that in the dancing, bobbing ship he was not of the least importance. One fine morning the captain called to the mate: "Wilson, there's Hatton actually helping the sailors. We'll make a man of him yet."

"The stuff's in the boy, sir; it wants to be brought out," said Wilson.

From that time on, Mortimer spent little time on the bridge, and much with the men. His face bronzed, and his hands hardened to ropes and sailor-work. In a week he had learned to furl sails and to do anything required of a common seaman. His powerful frame and strong muscles stood him in good stead, and made him equal in strength to two ordinary men.

It was a quiet morning, and the vessel was burying her nose rhythmically into the white foam at her bows. On the horizon, far ahead, curious little, leaden clouds had gathered. The captain was walking up and down on the bridge, more silent than usual.

"Funny clouds," said Mortimer.

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"Yes," replied the captain laconically. "Would you mind calling up Mr. Wilson?"

Mortimer looked at the captain. Wilson, the mate, had been on the bridge most of the night, and had only just gone down to take much needed rest.

"Tell Mr. Wilson I need him on the bridge at once."

Mortimer hastened down. In a few minutes the mate reported to the captain.

"Look at the glass, Wilson." The captain kept on walking.

"Great God!" said the mate, after a look at the barometer.

"Fasten down as much as you can. See the iron goes over the portholes. It may be two hours and it may be ten minutes before we strike into it."

A shrill whistle brought an officer to the bridge. A few rapid commands, and sailors began to bob up here and there.

Mortimer was standing quietly watching the unusual sight. "What is happening, captain?" he said at last.

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The captain pointed ahead. "It's always well to take precautions," he answered.

The curious, leaden clouds had spread rapidly over the sky. They were now licking like thick smoke at the fiery ball of the sun. The horizon circle had become a mass of foam, while every ripple near the vessel had died. Invisible, terrible weight seemed to force a supernatural calm upon the water, and to turn it an ugly greenish-brown. At the masthead the flag that had been flying a moment before, hung limp and motionless. The atmosphere was so positively dead that not even the motion of the ship could produce a flutter.

Thirty feet above the deck, on the yardarm of the forward mast, the sailors were working in feverish haste to furl the large, loose sail.

It all seemed like a nightmare to Mortimer, the atmosphere giving a queer perspective to every object about him. The air was saturated with a thick, strange odor that made it hard to breathe. At last he could

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stand the awful silence no longer. "It smells like death," he said, attempting to smile.

The captain did not answer. He stood at the wheel staring straight ahead.

Suddenly there came a sound from the distance like the bellowing of a herd of wild beasts. Moaning at first, but gradually growing into a roar.

The captain gave a quick glance at the men lying over the yardarm still tugging bravely at the sail. "They're two men short up there," he said. "Unless they finish quickly they're all lost."

"I'll go to help them," said the mate.

"No, I need you here, Wilson. And yet unless those men get through at once, the storm will toss them to the deck. I'm afraid it's too late even now."

On the yardarm the sailors were struggling in vain with the heavy sail. They heard the crashing of the storm in the distance, and from the bridge Mortimer could see terror painted on their faces.

Something struck Mortimer — a rope

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thrown by the captain. He heard a voice say: "Tie yourself!"

Far ahead, pieces of water lifted themselves up, spun around in queer shapes, and fell back on the waves. On the left, strange funnels of white foam formed in the water and sucked down everything above it. A knife-like, solitary wave rushed by the ship like a fiend. Mortimer felt the cold, stinging spray, and saw that it had thrown on the deck the dead, still quivering bodies of two gulls.

And still the sailors up there struggled in vain with the sail. "Tie yourself!" He knotted the rope around his waist. Then suddenly it ran through his mind like a flash: "The men! Be a coward—be a man—a man—a man!" He rushed down the steps. An instant, and he jumped into the rigging and climbed to the yardarm, where the men were panting. They saw him and held on, for his strength shot into their arms.

"Wilson, he's saved their lives!" The captain's voice was thick, and his teeth ground as he spoke, while the sail crept to the yardarm and was lashed.

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With cat-like rapidity the sailors slid to the deck. It was Mortimer's turn now—last. He was working his way from the end of the yard to the mast; the next moment he would be safe. The flag at the mast-head above moved, fluttered, tore into ribbons. A black abyss yawned before the ship, an abyss that had no bottom; and beyond the ocean rose to the sky. A dark shapeless mass shot from the yardarm to the deck, and the same moment the vessel was buried under a mountain of rushing, gurgling water.

The next day had come. The ocean, glistening with the rising sun, saw a storm-scarred ship slowly plodding on its course. The brave vessel had ridden through the tempest. Above, the Stars and Stripes flew at half-mast. Near the stern stood a group—the captain and his sailors—bareheaded. And a little white eddy on the smooth surface of the glistening water marked the spot where they had buried—a man.

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A TALE WITH A MORAL

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A TALE WITH A MORAL

ACCORDING to physiology, men cut their wisdom teeth at twenty or thereabouts. It is then that real and expensive foolishness begins. This I can prove.

Poor boy! He was one of those unfortunate beings who have an ideal. Worse! He had one whose little slippers touched the ground and whose queenly head moved among the ether of heaven. People with such notions sometimes get into trouble.

Of course he was doomed to disappointment from his youth. A man who chisels his ideal like unto the Venus of Milo, animates her with the spirit of perfection, and then expects to find her on earth, *ought* to be disappointed.

He had written about her; he had dreamed about her; but he had never found her.

Having arrived at the age of twenty-two,

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Jim Darston should have known better; but he didn't.

On the ocean even more than on land, he was susceptible to a maiden's charms. "Any girl can make herself look pretty at home," he said. "The test comes at sea, when one can study his fellow-creatures at their worst."

It was strange that he should have crossed the ocean seven times without serious entanglements. But the eighth proved fatal, for Miss Isabelle Wildworth, a young woman of more than ordinary charm, was aboard the ship. Possibly the case of nervous prostration with which he was travelling had something to do with it, as it may have weakened his intellect. Darston maintained that he fell in love with her at first sight, when they left the pier. As he expressed it, "It rushed upon him all at once."

If anyone who sees these lines can ever give me a rational explanation of this feeling, I should be deeply indebted to him. Never having experienced the sudden "rush" myself, I am unable to describe

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it. But it seemed inconsistent to me that Darston, who always spent days and weeks in examining the lungs and pedigree of a horse before he bought it, should, when it came to linking himself for life, shoot off at a tangent without even the meagre advice of a veterinary surgeon. But such was the case. In the space of three days he was engaged to the pretty, but absolutely unknown Miss Wildworth.

They had met for the first time at shuffleboard, and he cleverly managed an introduction to her by offering her his cue stick, which was straight and new at the end, in exchange for hers, which was crooked, and with which she had difficulty in pushing the wooden disks over the deck.

Then he told her that the vessel was rolling, and that they might possibly have a storm, and then again that possibly they might not. She said she hoped it would be rough, real rough, horribly rough. That always sounds well and courageous, even if you do not mean it. Other similarly inane remarks followed, which you can no more

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avoid on board of a steamer than you can avoid the law of gravitation.

They were playing on opposite sides of the game, but he showed that he liked her by shooting his wooden disk against hers, which was in the "minus ten square," thereby sending it into the "plus ten." If you think it is an easy thing to do, try it some time when the vessel is rolling.

At the end of the game they knew each other quite well, or thought they did, which amounts to the same thing. A few days of ocean sunshine seemed to ripen the acquaintance thus begun into more than friendship.

To say that he worshipped her would be to describe it inadequately. He carried meals to her; he staggered under her shawls; he read to her; and afterward he raved about her in the smoker.

I reasoned with him once or twice; that is, I told him what the rest of the passengers thought of him, adding a few forcible remarks of my own, all of which were not flattering. But he only growled softly, like a cat that has its fur stroked the wrong way.

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As for moral effect, it had none; which was sad.

Then I brought out my stock simile of buying horses. "When you buy a horse——"

"Yes, yes, I know that," he broke in.

"You look at his teeth, and see that they are perfect," I went on, bound to make my point, "you pound his chest to see that it's sound, you look at his knees and see that they are flexible; in short——"

"In short," he interrupted, "you don't know what you are talking about. Her teeth are pearls, her chest is superb, and her knees—she doesn't *appear* spavined. Look at her eyes, her mouth, her figure, man——"

"Look at that porpoise," I said, by way of changing the conversation. "It is you who are going to marry her, not I. Besides, it is unhealthy and unwise to get excited on the ocean before breakfast."

Jim Darston let me say a great many things that he would have killed other men for saying.

The girl was pretty, there was no doubt of

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that, and observant, too, for it did not take her long to discover in me an enemy to her plans.

Slowly we became accustomed to his lovelorn ways, and avoided hidden nooks on deck, where the two might be cooing after dark, sitting on rope coils or signal cannon.

Engaged people are particularly objectionable on board ship, and unless you have been doomed to travel with such a couple you would never even suspect *how* objectionable. On the best of ships the deck has but few exclusive places where there is just room enough for a man to sit down comfortably, alone with his pipe, to grumble at the stewards and the dinner smell and the thousand and one other little annoyances.

These places are invariably occupied by the engaged couples.

So we practically saw nothing of Miss Wildworth and Jim, and when we left the ship and assembled for one more meal, our first on land and our last together, no one knew what had become of them.

When we bade them farewell, they were

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standing together, amid boxes and trunks, looking radiantly happy.

Eight weeks later I boarded a steamer homeward bound. It was not with unmixed pleasure that I found Jim Darston's name on the passenger list, and, soon after, its proud possessor behind a bottle of champagne in the card-room—a case of lonely and despondent prodigality.

As I entered he jumped out of his chair. "At last some one I can talk to!" he cried. "I heard you were coming on this boat, and waited over. I've been in France, and found my French had gone to seed. Then I crossed to London. The confounded British English is about as easy to understand as Choctaw. I'm going home to commit suicide." He paused. "Why don't you say something?"

"I was waiting for you to finish."

"I have. I'm done. Finished. Waiting to be buried. Tombstone marked, 'Here lies a fool.'"

"That's quite an original inscription,

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but it would fit a number of graves. You, however, are too young to start the innovation, so let us see what we can concoct to keep you this side of the Styx. What did she do?" I asked.

"What do you mean? How did *you* know?" he said.

"It's the easiest problem I ever tried to solve. I leave you eight weeks ago, plus a girl, happy. I find you, to-day, minus the girl, unhappy. *Ergo, cherchez la femme. Quod erat demonstrandum.*"

"It isn't to *cherchez la femme*, it's to lose her; I want you to help me."

"Ah! I——" There I stopped, for I was about to commit the time-worn, moss-covered, universal crime of saying, "I told you so."

"Why?" I said instead.

"Because I have a letter from home, threatening to throw me out of the family in case I marry her."

I summed up: "So the case stands: on one side family trouble, disinheritance, and accompaniments—but with the girl, and

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love, and all that." I looked at him, but he did not move a muscle. "On the other hand, family reunion, the prodigal's return, and the usual breach of promise suit."

"Yes, that's it. That's it. A breach of promise suit. She wrote me that it was *me* or thirty thousand." His champagne glass fell to the floor with a crash, but he did not seem to notice it.

The mariner often takes his bearings from two observations. I had mine.

The next morning, coming on deck, I found a stout man, calmly wrapped up in my rug, stretched in my steamerchair. I was so surprised that I did not dare to claim it, and walked up and down, wondering what to do. I was still walking and ruminating when a coarse, heavy, bediamonded female stepped on deck, and the stout individual jumped up and offered her *my* chair and my rugs, which she immediately accepted.

The stout man, evidently not knowing how deeply I was interested in his gallantry, came over to the railing where I was standing.

"Vat a shoke!" he chuckled. "She

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t'inks it's my share, und it ain't. Some odder tamn fool pays fur it, und I inhabid it."

"Yes," I said, watching the huge mass of flesh as it quivered under its chuckle, like a jellyfish.

"Vat's your line?" he continued. "Mine's meat und groceries." He paused an instant; then his mind shifted once again from meat and groceries to the chair episode. "Von't dere be trouble ven der owner of dat share comes? Ha, ha, ha!"

Silence on my part did not seem to daunt him.

"Mine name's Ambrosius Feigenspund. Vat's yours?" he went on.

The stout woman who sat in my chair called to him, and he calmly sat down next to her, rolling himself up in someone else's shawls this time. He certainly was the concentrated essence of vulgarity. And this man Jim Darston and I had opposite to us at table.

He consumed unheard-of quantities of food, to say nothing of liquid, and literally

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shovelled down his meals with any utensil that was nearest at hand—preferably his knife—and while so doing he kept up a running dissertation on the merits of the eatables, giving market prices of the various articles, and general advice as to their quality. His huge face, beaming with good nature, assumed even larger proportions at meal times. Every now and then he would break out into moralizing. One evening at supper, after he had upset a bottle of claret, without the slightest apology to Jim Darston, into whose lap most of the wine had spilled, he unburdened his mind on the subject of children.

"Children is ungratitude," he said. "You feed 'em, you raise 'em. Ven dey is large dey go off. Mosdly esbecially girls. I have a girl vich——" Just then some one cut off his food-filtered speech by asking him for the salt. This started him on a lecture on salt, pepper, and mustard, and the present commercial adulteration of these articles, with prices. There was absolutely no way to keep him quiet, but you could

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steer his conversation into any channel you wished provided it were shallow. In deeper subjects he floundered about ridiculously.

I slowly became accustomed, if not reconciled, to Mr. Ambrosius Feigenspund's comical vulgarity, knowing that after a few days he would disappear from my horizon. But Jim Darston *loathed* him. Curiously enough, Mr. Feigenspund showed a decided liking for Jim, and confided any number of family secrets to him. In fact, Jim seemed helpless when Ambrosius Feigenspund chose to make him his victim.

One morning as I was standing at the railing, looking into the water, contemplating its depths and wondering at things in general, I heard voices, and knew that the spider had once more captured the fly.

"That—that photograph is not your daughter?"

"Yaw—sure—dat is my daughter. Und dis is her shild."

"Her child! She is married?"

"Yes und no. She married Vildwort, a scoundrel; she was *getrennt*."

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"What? I don't understand you. She is married?"

"No, she is *getrennt*—left him, von half year past."

I moved away. Jim was in even hotter water than I had imagined. Engaged to a divorced woman with a child—the daughter of Ambrosius Feigenspund!

My feelings were those of a noncombatant who sees a man slaughtered before his eyes. Being unable to help, I walked quickly away to the forward deck. Standing there I could watch the steerage passengers amusing themselves. Some were eating a combination dish of onions and herring; another group danced around a fiddler, who drew most awful tones from the violin, but kept excellent time. One of the dancers looked up, saw me, and grinned.

"Yous fellers up dere pays the cash, and we has the fun."

He was right. The amount of amusement I had procured for my expenditure, with Jim Darston thrown gratis on my hands, was very much out of proportion to theirs. So I was

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an attentive audience to their mirth, while mile after mile of ocean slipped along the keel of the ship.

"Excuse me, sir. The gentleman in 167 asks if you will kindly come to see him," said the steward.

Stateroom 167 was Jim Darston's. I knew it had to come, and I was prepared for anything; but not to find him in bed! In bed at high noon, with the sun painting tan over anyone who dared to face it on deck!

He said little. I suppose in some way he knew that I knew. There was a knock at the door.

"I vants to see how is Mr. Darston."

Jim trembled, and I took matters in hand.

With a rush I pulled the door open and stood before the mountain of flesh.

"Look here, Mr. Feigenspund, you'll either keep away from this stateroom and Mr. Darston the rest of this trip, or I will know why."

"I didn't know dat," he said, retreating.

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"That's the trouble with you. You don't know anything. I am going to meet you in the smoking-room in about fifteen minutes, and then you and I will have a little talk together. Good-by." With that I closed the door in his face.

Jim was absolutely unstrung, and, putting himself entirely into my hands, made a clean breast of everything to me—his father confessor for the time being.

I learned that he had written Isabelle Wildworth in regard to breaking off, and that she had replied with threats of a breach of promise suit. A number of letters had been exchanged on this topic, and at last Jim, driven to desperation, had tried to escape to America.

When I had all particulars at my fingers' ends I told Jim to remain in bed, locked his stateroom door, put the key into my pocket, and climbed up to the smoking-room.

In one corner sat Mr. Feigenspund, calmly smoking an enormous, black cigar. Before him, scattered over the table, lay the con-

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tents of four boxes of matches, with which he was slowly building a cage-tower with hippopotamus-like dexterity.

"I haf neffer builded it higher dan a foot," he said, when he saw me enter. And I had come in to battle with a man who I thought would fly at me to wreak vengeance, and found an elephantine idiot playing with matches!

Not knowing what to say, I watched him, ready to take advantage of any opening he might present.

"How is our frient?" he asked at last. He had given me the cue.

"Mr. Feigenspund," I began slowly and impressively, "you have been laboring under a misapprehension. You thought I was Mr. Darston's friend. I am not. I am his keeper."

"His *geeper?*"

"Yes; Mr. Darston is a maniac, but violent only at times."

"*Mein Himmel!* Und I haf been sitting next to dat man for six days!"

"I have watched you constantly, and

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should have helped you the moment he had grown violent. But we have not lost all hope. The doctors think he will be benefited by his coming marriage."

"Marriage?" gasped Feigenspund. "Who iss fool enough to marry an insanity man? *Mein Himmel!* Who iss fool enough?"

"That brings me to the second part of my story. On our way to Europe Mr. Darston and I met a very charming young woman, who promised to marry him. Her name, I believe, was Isabelle Wildworth."

"Isabelle Vildwort!" he gasped again. The match-tower fell and spread over the table, a complete wreck. "*Das gebe ich nie zu!*" he fairly shrieked, in his excitement falling into his mother tongue. "I neffer gif dat to—I mean agree. Neffer! Neffer!"

"I don't see what you have to do with it," I said innocently.

"I—I—she iss—my daughter—my daughter!"

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"Oh! That's really too bad. So she is your daughter? She is of age, I believe, and able to do as she likes; she can marry a lunatic if she chooses."

"Ach, she iss, iss she? Vell, ve vill see." He pulled half a library of papers and notebooks from his pockets, among them a photograph. "Dere must be some mistake. Is dat the young lady?"

It was an excellent likeness of our young fellow-passenger of eight weeks ago. There was not the slightest doubt left in my mind, I realized that to save Jim I had to play my game carefully to the end.

"That is the lady, and I am sorry for her."

"You are sorry for her. So! You are a geeper off a grazy man?"

"You are right, but this marriage may benefit him." Feigenspund's face had swollen to meal-time size.

"She neffer intended to marry him," he blurted out.

"Then we shall sue her in the courts for trifling with Mr. Darston's affections. Be-

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sides, how do you know that she did not intend to marry him ?"

"I do, I do." Again he brought out his library of letters, and selected one. "Look at dat, Mister Geeper—look at dat."

I took the letter.

"DEAR POP: On the steamer I found a man who went into my net more easily than I had dared to hope in my wildest dreams. I have sketched him proposing and in every other position of lovemaking. Do not be alarmed. I no more intend to marry him than I intend to marry the man in the moon.

"After two weeks, just as I was beginning to wonder how I had best crawl out of my engagement so as not to get into trouble with my own little dissolute brute of a husband at home, he became frightened and wanted to withdraw. I saw it was safe to play on, so I gave him the alternative of myself or thirty thousand. Then such dear stupid letters the poor fool wrote! 'For my family's sake;' 'for all that you hold

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sacred.' A perfect romance from beginning to end. My paper will be proud of me, my dear, vulgar pop.

"Your lost daughter,

"ISABELLE WILDWORTH."

Scales seemed to drop from my eyes; but I needed a few more threads to complete the evidence. With all the calmness I could command, I said: "What does she mean by 'My paper will be proud of me?'"

"Ach, she is a reporter for de New York *Gazette*. You know, new churnalism. Dey rented her, hired her to go ofer to make lofe to any one."

"And you expect me to believe that, Mr. Feigenspund?" I said solemnly.

"You do not belief? You vait." With that he vanished from the smoking-room, only to return in a few moments with a bundle of papers.

"Dere!" he cried. "You do not belief? Look! Look!" He threw the ponderous Sunday issue of one of our great papers upon the table.

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He had spoken the truth. There, covering two whole pages, was the story of Jim's ocean wooing, illustrated handsomely and profusely with sketches. She had mercifully given fictitious names, all else was true to life and told sarcastically well. Even poor Jim's letters were printed there verbatim. The double-leaded title stood out beautifully at the top:

SNARED ON THE DEEP.

And as a sort of introduction were these words:

A MAN'S PERFIDY EXPOSED.

"At great expense we have *created* for our readers a true love story at sea. Our clever correspondent, Miss Isabelle Wildworth, had been chosen for the difficult part, and has acquitted herself nobly, etc., etc."

Then it gave a true account from the shuffleboard introduction, to Jim's letters begging for release.

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When I had finished reading, Mr. Feigenspund was gone. I carefully pocketed the letter and the paper for future reference—should any be necessary.

Only a day remained of the trip, and during that time I saw no more of him. He must have taken his meals in his stateroom. Jim I kept in bed until we were fast to the pier. I wished to run no more chances. I would rather be on a ship with a panther roaming loose between decks than be appointed "keeper" of Jim Darston on the high seas.

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THE LOSS OF THE MICROBES

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THE LOSS OF THE MICROBES

"GOLLY! Look at that big piano comin' up," said one.

"That ain't no piano. That's probably a corpse. They always ship 'em that way, 'cause the sailors'd git scared if they saw a coffin."

It was Sunday, and still early in the morning. For hours we had been floating around helplessly in a concentrated solution of fog, without breakfast and with as much knowledge of our whereabouts as a fly that has had the misfortune to be packed into the middle of a bale of cotton.

Suddenly the fog lifted, the blue sky appeared, and those who had sensibly remained asleep up to this time, came on deck, saw Southampton close by, bathed in sunshine, and said it was lovely.

A little tender crept up with a drenched collection of passengers in the stern, and a

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tarpaulin-covered mountain of baggage in the bows.

Every trunk was handled in a dainty, careful way. Absolutely no hurry or confusion. The people came up the rear gangway. Prominent among them was a youth in a light-checked suit and a fog-soaked straw hat. He was the last one, evidently not wishing to part, even for an instant, from his satchel, trunk, and grim-looking alpenstocks which were carried after him. The satchel was a particularly curious affair, covered with a skin of hotel-tickets of European watering resorts, and had the appearance of a carefully decorated scrapbook.

The Youth fell on the top step of the gang-plank; and had not a sailor seized him most unceremoniously by the collar, he would, most probably, have been drowned. Of course it is always praiseworthy to save a man's life, but in this instance it would have prevented a quantity of trouble not to have interfered with the natural course of events.

The Youth had been graduated from col-

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lege three months before, and consequently knew everything. Graduates fresh from college always have the wisdom of the universe, distilled for them by professors, and force-pumped into their minds from text-books. As they get older, worldly wisdom oozes in, and in five years they are ready to admit that they are not omniscient and omnipotent. The Youth had not yet reached this stage.

He had nibbled for four years at medicine, at law, and at the sciences, and had come out with a high percentage and eye-glasses. His mission to Europe had been to recuperate from the effects of overwisdom, and, incidentally, "to study the cholera," which had again made its devastating appearance there.

He had a magnificent way of predicting evil and seeing the black side of everything. The host of passengers, already badly frightened by the real cholera from which they were trying to escape, offered a superb field for sowing a panic.

For a time things went on quietly. The

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passengers were sometimes happy and mostly seasick. The third morning the Youth said he smelled carbolic acid and iodoform. He did not keep this discovery to himself, but distributed it broadcast through the first and second cabins. By noon everyone was looking at everyone else, watching for the first manifestations of the dread infection.

The importance of the young ship's doctor was amusing. This being one of his first trips, he was overcome by the responsibility of having so large a number of people under his care. Strange to say, there was not one physician among the passengers, and this fact placed the ship's doctor on a still higher pinnacle of prominence.

He had been reading up considerably on cholera, so as to be ready to cope with it. That, and the unusual quantity of ailing old ladies, who took up a great deal of his professional time, had worked on his liver and made him cross, nervous, and anxious.

One morning the Youth called the Doctor into his stateroom. The Youth said that he had just discovered that he missed a satchel

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—that ticket-be-pasted one. A European doctor had asked him to take it to an American doctor. It was not so much the satchel as the contents that he was anxious about. The contents were glass tubes filled with a culture of living cholera microbes, sent for experiments to America. Suppose those glass tubes were smashed and the microbes should begin to crawl around. What then? The Doctor didn't know what then. It was extremely serious.

Why such dangerous baggage should have been entrusted to the Youth, and why, above all, he should have taken it, was somewhat mystifying. But he said that the bottles were sealed in the bag, and the bag was sealed over the bottles, so there was absolutely no danger. In fact, he had calmly travelled all over the Continent with them.

Of course the Youth was not to speak of it. Of course the Youth did speak of it, with the result that before supper it threw the ship into an uproar. People who can face lions and tigers fearlessly, quail at the mere thought of a microbe.

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Naturally the Captain had to be informed. He had been battling so long with mountain-high waves and cyclones, that to him the loss of a few microbes seemed a ridiculously small thing to worry about.

By this time five people had been taken with inexplicable pains. The Doctor had accordingly started at once with precautionary measures, and disinfectant odors were mingled with the ordinary kitchen smell that assails the decks at meal times. Taking it altogether, the steamer was rapidly becoming a most uncomfortable and undesirable abode. The five people with pains insisted that, owing to the recklessness of the Youth and the criminal negligence of the ship's management, the microbes had entered their systems. This could not be proved by facts; but a fact that needed no proof was, that *something* was wrong *somewhere*. Furthermore, the Doctor was losing flesh and nerve, and the fifth day he diagnosed the prevailing trouble as *Cholera*. Strange irony of Fate—it was the Youth who had begun to show the first indisputable

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symptoms. He was transferred at once to the hospital. Now the ship's hospital is in the bows, and the pitching there is frightful. But no one grudged it to the Youth.

Hailing from a port which the cholera had not touched, our ship had a clean bill of health, and only sickness aboard would detain us when we reached America. Thanks to the Youth we were now in the quarantine condition, with the pleasant prospect of anchoring in New York Bay, under a broiling sun, for two weeks.

The extra sanitary precautions that were now taken were very distressing. Some timorous ladies went as far as to carry a plate, a fork, and a spoon to their room, and to bring them to each meal. They washed these utensils themselves, in boiling water. A few of us recklessly lived and dined as usual. One benefactor asserted that champagne was the only liquid that positively destroyed microbes, and after that, the men at least, showed more cheerful countenances.

The Captain, instead of drinking boiled water and avoiding fruit, had *ordered the*

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satchel to be found. When he *ordered* a thing to be done, he meant business, and the stewards knew it. The result was, that shortly after his edict went forth the satchel *was found*, and taken to his cabin. This was at noon-time. When he had finished figuring out the wrong number of miles, and gotten his ship fixed as correctly as possible as to the latitude and longitude, he came down. Quite a number of passengers had assembled. The young Doctor was there, and had already begun to scatter disinfectants indiscriminately.

The Captain being in an unusually pleasant frame of mind submitted to be sprinkled with carbolic acid. Then with an incredulous smile he opened the bag. He closed it again at once; the smile had left his face. "Doctor," he said, "you were right. The matter is more serious than I thought. The test-tubes are broken and the contents scattered through the bag."

There was a slight flutter among those who were present, and two or three tried to leave, but the Doctor planted himself firmly

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against the door. It was a proud moment for him. Even the Captain had been forced to admit that he, the Doctor, was right. "One moment, one moment," he said. "Of course the danger of infection is great, but I will attempt to minimize it with disinfectants. But first I should like the full names of all those present. The Authorities of New York will want your names and addresses, so that in case of infection we can trace you."

"Poppycock!" protested an old gentleman present. "I'm not going to submit to any more of this nuisance."

"Your name, sir," said the Doctor, barring the door.

"My name's John Timothy Farrell, and I advise you to steer clear of me in the future."

"Come, gentlemen," remonstrated the Captain, "the microbes have been found. I shall end the whole matter by throwing them overboard." He was about to carry out his intention, but the Doctor held him back.

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"Don't throw them overboard, *I* will take them."

"Look here," said the Captain, "we've had enough fuss on this ship about these microbes. The best thing for all of us will be to drop the matter right here."

"You will do nothing of the kind," snapped the Doctor. The bellicose old Mr. John Timothy Farrell here remarked that he personally would "flatten the nose of that insolent puppy," when suddenly the satchel dropped to the floor and scattered its contents thereon. The articles thus produced from the bag were, to wit: One toy donkey about five inches long, such as children play with; half a dozen more or less broken test-tubes, in each of which stuck the remains of a Maybug; and a letter addressed "to all whom it may concern." This letter had dropped at Mr. John Timothy Farrell's feet, and before anyone recovered from amazement, he was reading it in a stentorian voice to the assembled passengers.

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"TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

"The contents of this bag will no doubt be a surprise to anyone who may open it.

"The young man who thrust himself into our midst and annoyed us exceedingly, *demanded cholera microbes* in the interest of *American Science*.

"His sublime conceit and persistence at first amused and then exasperated us; and as he refused to leave unless we granted his request, we unanimously decided, in order to rid ourselves of his delightful company, to humor his whims. So as not to endanger unnecessarily the health of people who may have the misfortune to encounter the bag and him, we have used harmless substitutes.

"NINE DOCTORS."

The scene that followed was such a painful one for the Doctor, that it may in charity be spared the telling.

Of course the story travelled from stem to stern in an incredibly short time, and the Doctor found it advisable to seclude him-

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self. The curious part of the whole affair was, that every trace and symptom of cholera had disappeared before nightfall. The news reached even the Youth, supposedly safe in the ship's hospital. To the great surprise of all, he appeared about midnight in the smoking-room, declaring that he felt better. He stayed only a short time, because everyone insisted on drinking his health, the toast being invariably, "To the Donkey and the May bugs!"

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A QUIET TRIP FOR THE NERVES

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A QUIET TRIP FOR THE NERVES

"A STEAMER is a thing with an uncertain number of masts, that mixes up its contents. I don't quite see how you can say it 'steadies your nerves,' my dear," remarked Mrs. Trembleton.

"Not the ocean greyhound. The slow, ordinary ship. I find it does my nerves a world of good," answered Mrs. Jamble, plunging the last of four pins into her hat before a mirror. "I'll see you again about it."

They did see each other again about it a score of times at "pink teas" and "green at-homes" and "violet musicales." And the outcome of it was, that within a month the two young women and their husbands were booked for Europe on a freight steamer, that ordinarily carried no passengers—"to quiet their nerves."

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To their number were added: Mr. Simpkins, a gentleman of forty-five; fat, jovial, and full of fun; and his nephew, Romulus, a youth of little avoirdupois, twenty-three years, and much conceit.

No one but Mr. and Mrs. Jamble had ever taken this sort of trip before. The others had been inveigled into it by reason of its novelty.

Mr. and Mrs. Trembleton's social functions, when at home, were infinite. Both welcomed "a rest for the nerves." Mr. Simpkins went because Mrs. Jamble had told him to go, and also because seven nights of dissipation in each week were beginning to tell on him. Romulus added his delightful company because no one wanted him.

She was certainly not a fast ship. Little sailboats scudded by, and left the steamer lumbering in their wake. Mr. Simpkins drew Mrs. Jamble aside. "Is this the pace this tub is going to keep up all the way?" he asked.

Mrs. Jamble laughed. "Is the speed

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insufficient for a fast gentleman like yourself?"

Mr. Simpkins did not answer for a moment. Then he said: "*Speed*, Mrs. Jamble, is a misnomer in this case. *Speed* implies reasonable motion. This vessel merely floats."

As they drew farther and farther away from land, and finally lost sight of it, the restless spirit of hurry subsided even in Mr. Simpkins. There was nothing by which to measure speed but the clouds, and occasionally a piece of driftwood. The grand sublimity of the ocean was beginning to subdue the little party of six.

They had a jolly luncheon with the Captain, and took their coffee on the bridge, which seems a triumph in itself when one knows the usual inaccessibility to that portion of the ship's anatomy on the ordinary passenger steamer.

Mr. and Mrs. Jamble were the only ones who had wisely brought steamer-chairs; the rest had trusted as usual to the Ocean Comfort Company to provide them. That in-

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stitution is not represented on freight steamers, and so the two stewards did their best to manufacture four articles somewhat similar to steamer-chairs, but far from safe in construction should a storm roughen the ocean.

The day passed in quiet restfulness, and after supper two sailors furnished an enjoyable banjo concert.

"My dear Mrs. Jamble," said Mr. Simpkins, "I take back anything I may have thought this morning about this ship."

"My dear Mr. Simpkins," said Mrs. Jamble, "not being a mind-reader, I don't know what you thought of this ship, but you will find that, barring discomforts, it's a pleasant place, and quiets the nerves."

The ladies went to bed early, and the men sat with the Captain and listened to his yarns until after midnight. Then the lights were put out, and the vessel crept through the waters silently, with her green eye on the starboard side, and her red eye on the port side, while the bell rang out every half hour and told the stars the time. And probably the stars laughed at the little black

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speck that was crawling through the waters with so many sleeping beings who seemed of such great importance to themselves when they were awake.

The sun rose. The red eye on the port side and the green eye on the starboard side closed, and the vessel "danced" quite perceptibly, although it was Sunday. Nature seems to take no account of Sunday, and works and plays and frolics without rest.

This playfulness of the ocean did not suit Mrs. Trembleton nor Romulus. Mr. Jamble, too, was "under the weather," and examined the barometer at the head of the stairs to see whether the probabilities were that they would all be down for dinner.

Attention having, in this way, been called to the barometer, everyone studied that interesting instrument. It had "dropped" distressingly since the day before, and seemed to sink lower every minute. The ladies became so nervous and worried, that at a moment when no one was watching, Mr. Trembleton finally unscrewed it from its fastenings and hid it under the sofa.

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It was a splendid *coup d'état.* Its absence was detected at once, of course, but Mr. Trembleton explained that the mate had had it taken down, as it "leaked." That was the reason it had dropped so fast. It was an ingenious explanation, and had a good effect on the ladies and on Romulus. Removed from sight, in the dark, under the sofa, the barometer went on "dropping," until in some unaccountable way Romulus stumbled, and stepped on it. Then little pellets of quicksilver played around under the furniture, and a steward had to have his finger bandaged after picking up the broken fragments of glass. None of the ladies knew of the death of the barometer, nor would they have cared *had* they known, for by this time the fell grip of sea-sickness was upon them.

The staterooms, of which this steamer possessed very few, were "way aft," which in English means that they were situated in the back, almost directly over the propeller. In stormy weather, as the vessel pitched and the screw every few moments beat around

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wildly in the air, without resistance, the sensation in these staterooms was that of an alternate deluge and earthquake. When the stern of the ship was under water the green ocean covered and rushed by the port-hole, producing the deluge effect; and when the vessel rode the crest of the wave, the slashing of the propeller resembled the earthquake.

The first and second mates offered their cabins, which were amidships, and the ladies were carried and led thither. Romulus said it was immaterial to him where he died, and that this was his first and last ocean voyage.

The only one who was absolutely unaffected was Mr. Simpkins Sr. He laid aside decorum and propriety, and called on the ladies in their staterooms. He concocted a mixture of dry champagne and cracked ice, and fed such a quantity of it to both Mrs. Jamble and Mrs. Trembleton that the former began to sing in her berth, and the latter told strange stories. But both were much comforted, and dozed off in a mild state of intoxication. Then Mr.

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Simpkins withdrew and left them to the tender mercies of their husbands, who, fully occupied with their own unhappiness, realized their uselessness.

That night Mr. Simpkins and the Captain were the only ones at table, and became better friends during the time that the "half-a-gale" roared through the rigging than they could have become on land in a score of years.

The next morning the sea had calmed down to a fairly comfortable roll. Mr. Simpkins rose early and sat down at the rather lonely-looking cover spread for him on the large table. The steward came in: "Do you know the snake's up, sir?"

"What's that? What's that?" grunted Mr. Simpkins. "Snake soup? No, sir. The food on this tub's abominable enough without snake soup."

"No, sir, the snake is out, sir," corrected the steward.

"Look here, Jim or Tom or whatever your name is, it's rather early in the day for you to be seeing snakes, eh?"

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"No, sir. The snake, sir, we're carryin' to England, sir—got out of her cage during the storm, sir—and they can't find her."

Mr. Simpkins looked at the steward incredulously for a moment. "Do you mean there's a live snake on this boat?"

"Yes, sir. She's about eight foot long, sir; and there's fourteen monkeys and a zebra, too, sir. Only they is still in the cages. But the keeper's that sick, he says he can't get up to feed 'em."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Simpkins with a gasp. "An eight-foot snake foraging loose around the ship, an unfed menagerie—and we're taking this pleasure trip to quiet our nerves!"

That moment the Captain came in. "You have heard?" he said; "they can't find her."

"Look here, Captain, what the devil do you ship menageries over the ocean for?"

"Pays well. Never had one break out before. You must be careful not to mention it to the ladies."

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"You are taking it rather coolly," said Mr. Simpkins.

"What do you want me to do? Lie down and pray? What we must do, is to keep the rest in their staterooms till the thing's found."

"The weather is smooth, and they will be out presently," said Simpkins meditatively. "The only way to keep them abed is to make the steamer pitch again."

The Captain looked at him questioningly.

"Of course," continued Simpkins, "you've got to run out of your course to buck up against the waves, but at the rate this ship is travelling, a few hours in one direction or the other don't make a bit of difference."

Five minutes later, just as Mr. and Mrs. Trembleton, and Mr. and Mrs. Jamble had made up their minds to rise, the ship began to plunge and pitch again in a most disagreeable way.

Mr. Simpkins went to their stateroom-doors and called to them to stay in their berths "until the weather moderated."

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Jamble called back he wished he were home. Mrs. Jamble then took up the thread of complaint, and said that they had been kept awake all night by the squeaking of rats.

Simpkins promised to procure rat-traps, and monologued himself down the passage with "Wonder if they would be frightened if I told them that their rats are monkeys."

He heard it distinctly now, too, and following the chatter and the squealing, but carefully avoiding dark corners for fear of the snake, he came to a partition through the cracks of which he could look down and see the cages.

A big object was moving around among them, and when Mr. Simpkins became accustomed to the semi-darkness, he saw that the object was an immense black bear, roaming about loose without rope or chain. Mr. Simpkins understood now why the keeper's sea-sickness was so uncomfortable. The monkeys and zebra could only be fed by entering the barn-like room that their cages were in. And one could evidently only enter the barn-like room if one were a friend of

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the ominous-looking bear. After coming to this conclusion Mr. Simpkins went on deck for another conversation with the Captain.

"They are still in their bunks and likely to remain there as long as you keep your ship dancing the way she does." He glanced at the compass. "Ah, I see we are going home again."

"It would be more to the point if you'd seen something of the snake," answered the Captain, with a look that plainly showed there was murder in his heart. "It's the last time I ship a menagerie."

"That resolution, sir, does you credit, only I wish you had formed it on your last trip instead of on this one."

"I am going to have this ship going in the right direction again, too, snakes or no snakes!" growled the Captain, giving the wheel a spin.

Slowly the vessel answered the helm. They were once more moving with the wind, and there was hardly any motion. Mr. Simpkins lit a cigar and waited for the Captain to begin conversation.

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"Never happened to me before, such a thing," said the latter at last.

"How did it come about, anyway?" asked Simpkins.

"Well, last night the keeper had more whiskey than was good for him. He forgot to close the door of the place where the animals are. In the middle of the night he remembered, went back, found that the snake was gone. In his rage he unchained the bear, drank another pint of whiskey, locked the door to the menagerie, and threw the key overboard. He then hit two men, who were peacefully sleeping, over the head with a piece of iron, and went to bed again."

"Can't you get any of the crew to go in and feed the beasts?"

"That's the worst of it. The door is iron, and nothing short of dynamite can open it, unless you can get at the inside. There's a latch that'll open the lock. It was put there so in case anyone were locked in by mistake he could get out."

"Got any dynamite?"

"No," said the Captain.

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"Is there no other way of getting in but the door?" asked Simpkins.

"There's the skylight. That first one before the cabin, you can't see it from here, opens down on it."

"H'm! I will see what I can do. I will try to make friends with the bear through the skylight, and let down some food with a rope."

So Mr. Simpkins procured a pail of water, a piece of meat, and a rope, and went forward on his errand of mercy. Just as he was stepping by the cabin-door, wondering what his gray-haired club friends at home would say if they could see him, out came Mr. Trembleton.

"Hullo! Man! What are *you* up to?"

"Come along and see," said Mr. Simpkins mysteriously.

In a few moments Mr. Trembleton was as deeply interested as Mr. Simpkins. They lifted off the top of the skylight together, and found that they could thus obtain a magnificent view of the menagerie below.

The two were not alone very long. One

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by one the others came on deck, and the skylight was soon the centre of attraction. The ladies especially, enjoyed the situation hugely, and felt how interestingly this episode could be worked out in letters to friends at home. Of course Mr. Simpkins had omitted to tell them about the escaped snake. That would have robbed the situation of much of its humor.

"How's the bear?" asked the Captain when he walked up to the party still assembled around the skylight an hour later.

"We have upset two pails of water over him, and he's crazy. The monkeys are pretty nearly drowned, too. You can't get at the blessed things from up here," said Mr. Simpkins.

"Why not arrange a sort of hoisting-tackle," suggested Romulus, "and let some one down."

"That's a brilliant idea, my boy. All you want is fresh air and lots of rope, and your ideas pop out like ripe strawberries," said Mr. Simpkins.

One of the beams used for lowering freight

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into the hold was right above the skylight, and it was an easy thing to attach a rope and pulley by means of which a chair and a person sitting in it might be lowered.

The luncheon-gong at this moment interrupted proceedings, and the question of feeding the bear, the monkeys, and the zebra gave way to the pleasant prospect of gratifying their own appetites.

An hour later they once more gathered around the opening, and saw that while they had been feasting, somebody had carried out Romulus's suggestion. A comfortable arm-chair was swinging above the skylight, ready to be lowered.

"Now, Romulus, kiss the ladies good-by, get into the chair, and pay a visit to the bear," said Mr. Simpkins, who during luncheon had taken rather more of the liquids than was good for him.

"I?" asked Romulus in an aggrieved tone—"I?"

"You're afraid," said Mr. Simpkins. "When I was young the devil himself couldn't scare me."

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They walked to the stern together, Mr. Simpkins gesticulating wildly. The rest of the party joined the Captain on the bridge, where the latter had ordered the after-dinner coffee.

Presently Mr. Simpkins and Romulus came from the stern of the ship, where they had been engaged for some time in earnest conversation. Simpkins seemed very jovial and happy. Perhaps it was the fresh, intoxicating ocean air, perchance the over-indulgence in wine at luncheon. "Yes, yes, all right, I agree," he said.

"If we see a ship within the next hour *you* go down. If we don't, I will. Done," said Romulus. The uncle and his nephew clasped hands.

"It's five minutes of two," said Mr. Simpkins. "Now let us have coffee with the rest."

They climbed up on the bridge, and for a time menageries and snakes did not enter the conversation there.

The steamer was the centre of a blue, rippling surface of water, innocent of disturb-

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ance. Romulus anxiously studied the horizon for a ship. As the minutes slipped by, the likelihood of interviewing the bear became to him more certain and distasteful, for that was what their compact meant.

Suddenly Mrs. Jamble jumped up. "There's a ship! Hurrah, there's a ship!"

"Damn it," said Mr. Simpkins. Everyone looked at him in surprise.

"Yes, a large one too, uncle," observed Romulus, smiling; "just ten minutes before three."

"You keep a diary?" asked the Captain, "that you're so anxious about the precise moment of time?" The Captain and Mr. Simpkins had walked over to the other side of the bridge.

"The 'Jaspia'—going our way—faster too. Was to ship the menagerie, only we bid lower. I wish they *had* taken the snake and the bear."

"So do I," said Mr. Simpkins.

"Uncle!" called out Romulus, "let's have another look at the menagerie, you and I."

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"I am coming."

The Captain looked after uncle and nephew as they slowly descended from the bridge. "The old one's had more wine than is good for him," he said to himself; "the young one's an impudent ass. If they were on land I'd keep an eye on them, for they'd get into some kind of trouble."

Meanwhile the other steamer was approaching and claiming the attention of the party on the bridge to such an extent, that they did not notice what was going on at the "menagerie skylight." Besides, a deck-cabin hid the skylight and the lowering apparatus from view.

What happened there, however, was that Mr. Simpkins, with a great deal of trouble and assistance, had climbed into the suspended chair, and that Romulus was slowly lowering him.

Wine and the cheer of it are responsible for many inexplicable acts of the children of men. If the fact needed further proof, the latter was certainly furnished by Mr. Simpkins and his hopeful nephew.

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"What's Romulus up to now, I wonder?" asked Mrs. Trembleton at about this time. When that boy is quiet I always fear there is trouble brewing."

She spoke more truly than she knew. Trouble was indeed brewing. The joke and the wager between Romulus and his uncle were quickly assuming a serious aspect. Mrs. Trembleton had hardly finished wondering what had become of Romulus when the latter made his appearance. His face was pale with fright.

"You'd better come and—h-help m-me," he said; "the r-rope's stuck."

It took only an instant for them to hurry to the skylight opening. Let down through it, fifteen feet below the deck, hung Mr. Simpkins, sitting in the chair and swinging to and fro with the ship's motion, like a huge pendulum. He was suspended about ten feet above the floor of the menagerie compartment, so that the bear, who was walking around on his hind legs and making occasional grabs at the new source of disturbance, just barely missed him.

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"Please *do* pull me up," cried Mr. Simpkins from the cavernous depths. "Romulus is a goat, a fool, an ass, a——" here the chair swung wildly, as a wave threw the vessel on her side, and Mr. Simpkins needed all his energy to keep from being dashed against one of the beams.

"It seems we have had part of the menagerie with us in the cabin," said the Captain, looking at Romulus.

"*Please* pull me up," came again from below. Poor Mr. Simpkins did not know that something in the pulley-block had broken, and that the rope had been hopelessly jammed and entangled. So it was impossible either to raise or lower the chair in which the unfortunate Simpkins was swinging and spinning.

No one knew what to do. Another rope might have been let down to him, but he had not climbed ropes since he was a boy. Help came from a most unexpected quarter.

When every attempt to rescue him had proved fruitless, a sailor appeared and announced that a vigorous cold-water bath had

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restored the erstwhile drunken animal-keeper to ordinary consciousness. That his story of throwing the key to the animal compartments overboard was false, a whiskey hallucination, as the precious key had been found in his left trousers pocket. And lastly, that at the present moment, his hand, steadied by a sailor with a strap and a threat of another cold-water bath, the keeper was about to enter the menagerie.

The sailor had no sooner finished the message, when a creaking in the lock below was heard, and the next instant the keeper, somewhat unsteady, appeared among the animals. The half-drowned bear greeted him effusively.

"Wha's they been doin' to my tootsy—wootsy—wha's——"

"You chain that bear and help the gentleman down," came from the Captain above.

The keeper for the first time looked up and discovered Mr. Simpkins hanging a few feet above his head. The effect this produced on his still muddled mind must have

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been intense, for with a shriek he fell on his knees praying for mercy.

"Don't be an ass. Get me a step-ladder," shouted Mr. Simpkins, "or I'll jump down and wring the necks of you and the whole blooming menagerie."

Fifteen minutes later the rescued Mr. Simpkins was tearing through the ship, a big, knotted rope in hand, looking for Romulus.

The Captain had gone down to interview the keeper in regard to the lost snake.

"Snake lost?" hiccoughed the latter. "Wha's snake's lost? My snake's 'sleep in corner. Want see my snake? Beau'ful snake."

"Then you lied to the men when you told them the snake had escaped last night?"

"Lie? No, play joke, play joke."

The Captain said nothing, but keeping his eye on the chained bear, heroically climbed into a dark corner where the snake-box stood. To be sure, there lay the monster, curled up, asleep!

How punishment was meted out to the

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offenders no one but they themselves seemed to know. The keeper's howls resounded through the ship for a little while after the adventure. Possibly the crew had taken a hand at retribution. At any rate, whatever it was, it proved salutary, as the animals were well cared for during the rest of the trip.

Romulus and his uncle did not speak for a few days, but after that the soothing influence of the ocean healed their differences.

It was the evening of the eleventh day. They were all sitting together on the bridge. From the bow came the twang of the banjo.

"Captain, is there any danger of our getting in before to-morrow night?" asked Mr. Simpkins. "This trip has really done wonders for my nerves."

"Look," said Romulus, "what bright star is that on the horizon?"

"It is the answer to your uncle's question," quietly remarked the Captain. "It is the first light-house."

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And then Mrs. Trembleton, who possessed a very good voice, began "My country, 'tis of thee," and everyone joined, which was very inconsistent, for it wasn't their country at all—only England.

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AFTER MANY YEARS

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AFTER MANY YEARS

"HELP!"

Only one word, and yet there spoke from it a terrible despair as it rang down the narrow ship's passage, and was lost amid the throbbing and panting of the machinery.

An old man stepped out into the passageway and listened. Not a sound, save the regular rumble of the engines, and the clatter of the dishes, for they were setting the table in the saloon up forward. But he felt quite sure that he had heard a cry. Ah! there came a faint groan from the room on the left.

He walked over to the entrance. The curtain was only half drawn. On the floor lay a man, his head pillowed on a shawl. His face was ashen white, and foam had gathered at his mouth. His hands and body worked convulsively. Bent over him on her

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knees was a woman, bathing his head with water and looking with an expression of terror into his glassy eyes.

Seeing the stranger at the door, she said quietly, with wonderful composure: "Will you send the doctor quickly—quickly, please?"

Mr. Wardby, that was the stranger's name, hurried away, and in a few moments returned with the ship's physician. The man lying on the floor—he must have been about sixty—was resting more quietly, and the woman had risen from her knees, and was sitting on the sofa, her hands folded, her eyes on the prostrate man. As they entered she covered her face and cried softly.

The doctor gave a glance at the man, then at the woman.

"It would be better, madam, if you went on deck, for I might otherwise have two patients instead of one."

She did not move, but sat there, her face as white and clear-cut as marble. A beautiful face, framed as it was in white hair, but the tell-tale lines about the mouth and the

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deep pencilling on the forehead, told of long suffering.

"Do me the favor to go on deck," repeated the doctor; "we shall need you presently."

Slowly she permitted herself to be led from the room by Mr. Wardby. "I *ought* not to leave him," she said, and yet he felt her arm in his pressing forward, not holding back. With keen perception he read pity in her look and voice, deep pity, nothing else. He had spent forty years in studying men and women, and he had studied well, and could look deep into the heart, where others saw but the surface.

Quietly he helped her to mount the narrow stairs, and when they reached the deck he threw over her shoulders a light shawl that he had taken from her stateroom, for she was shivering.

On one side of the deck the children were playing and the young folk dancing to the sound of an asthmatic accordeon. The sunshine made the scene bright and warm.

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"Let us go to the other side," she whispered. "You are very kind."

They turned the corner of the cabin, and a cold, chilling blast met them. The wind had upset a few steamer-chairs, and here and there a stray wave-crest had dashed over, and driven everyone into the bright sunshine on the leeward side.

"How the turning of a corner brings us from sunshine into shade, and how often we deliberately choose the latter," he thought. But he said nothing, waiting for her to speak.

So they walked side by side, like a picture of bygone days, and the ocean pitched and tumbled around the ship, as it had done when they were young.

"He has not had such an attack for a long time," she said.

"He suffers from them frequently?" asked Mr. Wardby.

"If anything were to happen," she continued, as if she had not heard his question, "I have no one on board to turn to, no one to help me."

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"Nothing will happen, my dear madam. Your husband will recover from the attack quickly; he is probably over it now."

"Then let me go down again."

"In a few minutes," he said; "wait until the wind has brought back a little color to your cheeks."

She gave a faint smile. "The color left my cheeks when I was young, never to return."

They stood at the railing now.

"Look," she said suddenly, "they are throwing overboard some flowers, my—my roses. Perhaps their odor was too strong for him in the room."

A box of beautiful pink mermets, thrown from the port-hole, were tossing on the waves below. For an instant longer they appeared on the top of a huge wave, and then a glistening crest pressed them down beneath the waters.

She shuddered.

"Did your husband give you those?"

"No—no," she answered, almost fiercely, "he has not given me roses in—thirty years."

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The man at her side said nothing. He drew the shawl back over her shoulders, for it had slipped off and she had not noticed it.

"You are kind, very kind," she murmured. "I feel as if you were a friend sent me in my trouble, and yet we only met for the first time a few minutes ago."

"Yes, we only met for the first time a few minutes ago," he repeated slowly.

"A man is happier than a woman," she said, more to herself than to him.

He stood staring seaward. "Sometimes it only seems so," he answered. "Sometimes there is a storm at the beginning of a man's life, from which he never quite recovers."

"You look so happy, there could not have been in yours."

"There was in mine." He looked off to a spot where a storm-petrel was skimming the water. "Long ago," he went on as if he were telling a story to a child, "there was a girl who would have made a better life of mine—had she been true."

The woman at his side had riveted her

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eyes upon his face. "And," she said, "and——"

"She was false!"

Her fingers felt for one of the iron supports that held the awning above the deck. Her hand closed over it with a fierce grasp. The pressure broke the small, thin golden ring on her finger. With a jingle it fell to the deck.

He stooped and picked it up, and she held out her white hand to receive it. "What—was—her name?"

"Mabel."

For an instant she seemed ready to fall, then her hand again grasped the iron support.

He was staring fixedly at something unseen, far, far away—in the past. And when at length he looked around, like one who has returned from a long voyage, he was standing alone.

The doctor was just coming out upon the deck.

"He has pulled through again. Poor wife! Poor wife!" he said.

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"What ailed him?"

"Drink. One of the cases that make the lives of those about them a hell. Poor wife!"

Just then the man with the asthmatic accordeon shot around the corner of the cabin, followed by a troupe of laughing, dancing children.

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THE "YES" FLAG*

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THE "YES" FLAG

THERE are various kinds of objectionable people in this world. Their sins range all the way from flattering to horse-stealing. But there is one vice which is more practically disagreeable than all the others put together. I refer to souvenir-collecting.

There is nothing sacred to collectors. They would chip pieces from the ghost in "Hamlet," could he be found, with the same composure with which they secrete their unsuspecting host's salt-spoons and sugar-tongs at a tea-party.

Girls develop this vice as well as men; perhaps more so. As long as they confine themselves to hitting off fragments from ancient tombstones while the guide is not looking, nobody cares. But the moment they encroach on the prosaic, living present, they come into conflict with a number of well-established customs.

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The girl I am telling you of was witty, bright, and pretty, and she stole souvenirs. She had never been on an ocean steamer before, and therefore she had decided that she ought to have something to remember her first trip by. But everything was screwed or tied fast, except a few articles that would hardly add to the charm of a young girl's boudoir. This was unfortunate, as you will see.

After the girl had unsuccessfully roamed about the ship for four days with the souvenir craze strong upon her, something happened: a wave dashed over the port bow of the ship. It wiped away everything in its path, and left remnants of one of the lifeboats clinging to the davits.

Then it climbed into the box holding the signal-flags, and from this point took a hand in the destinies of the girl. In this way: It thoroughly water-logged the signal-flags, and necessitated their drying the next day.

The officer who had charge of this (I have forgotten whether his grade was one or two, but he was good to look upon, and also in

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love with the girl, having known her before he went to sea) ordered the flags to be strung along to dry on a rope stretched parallel with the deck, and about three feet above it.

In the code each consonant of the alphabet is represented by a flag. There is one which marks the letter "C," and also means "yes." It is a pointed flag, blue ground with a white ball, or a white flag with a red ball, I have forgotten which; but it doesn't matter. The officer had shown this particular flag to the girl the day before, because it was the initial of her Christian name.

The morning when the flags were hung out to dry was chilly; but the girl, possessing a superabundant amount of vitality, came on deck and saw her chance. The wind must have frozen her intellect, for realizing that she was alone, she came to the conclusion that there were flags enough for the ship, plus one, and that that particular one had been placed there providentially for her to steal; only she did not call it by that ugly term.

The "yes" flag, which, as I said before,

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was also the initial of her name, was hanging there among the others, but she soon had it hidden under her ulster.

On her way back to the cabin she met the officer, who made her stop and speak to him.

He turned the conversation deftly from the weather to love. He said that no one had ever loved as he. Which was original. That he had known her a long, long time. Which was true. That she, by her hard-heartedness, had driven him to a life on the ocean wave. Which was partly true. That he would be her slave for life. Which was absolutely untrue.

He was in earnest, thoroughly in earnest; so much so that he never saw the tip of the flag dangling out below the tightly buttoned ulster.

Before her answer had a chance to come out, a wave dashed in, and brought the momentous interview to a sudden close.

A few hours later a steamer passed and asked a question by flags; and there were replies by flags. Then the other steamer, not satisfied, drew up another color combi-

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nation, and our captain politely prepared to do the same. The "yes" flag was to occupy a prominent position in this reply, but the "yes" flag could not be found, as it reposed at that moment in the girl's stateroom.

The captain said several miserable things about the officer, who, it seems, had these minor details of the ship's wardrobe in charge. He also expressed a desire that the officer might go to ——, but there is no reason for repeating, as the scene was painful enough at the time, and long remembered by those who had the misfortune to be in the neighborhood.

When the captain had made it clear to all about him that they were unfit for everything except eternal damnation, he double-reefed his temper and ordered up another flag combination, which did quite as well as the one he had first intended to fly. Then he took another look at the compass and forgot all about the incident.

Not so the girl. She had just been carefully tied into a steamer chair, right under the bridge, when the captain lost control of

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courtesy and polite language above. As she could not get away, she was obliged to listen to the whole performance, as helpless as an Egyptian mummy.

As the captain outlined the case loudly and carefully, copiously sprinkling it with forcible expletives, she was at no loss to discover what it was all about, and, knowing herself to be the cause, suffered accordingly.

The deck-boy, who was near her, sweeping off the waves that now and then washed overboard and eddied around the six legs of her steamer chair, said that the captain would probably end by killing the officer.

If the girl had not been tied, she would have rushed up and interposed, and created an elaborate and beautiful scandal in which the whole ship would have wallowed with delight.

The deck-boy then related how on a former trip a mate had been put in irons for losing a piece of rope, and how he had then been tied to the mast near the top as an example. He really had a magnificent imagi-

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nation, this deck-boy, and added harrowing details as he went along.

The top of the mast was just at this moment swinging back and forth through an arc of air about fifty feet long, and the mere thought of her officer tied up there made the girl feel dizzy.

The cabin-boy stirred up her feelings to their innermost depths. The stirring process caused one thing to rise and make itself known—that she loved the officer. She had never felt that before.

The same thing happens when you stir around a pool with a stick. Large, pure air bubbles rise up from the bottom and shoot out into recognition. If you hadn't stuck your cane into the mud nothing would have come out till the end of time.

But this stirring up of love-bubbles came somewhat late, for soon after the captain's volcanic eruption, the man in the masthead sang out "Land!" or the regulation thing they sing out in mastheads on such an occasion.

The steam winches began to pull out of

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the dark hold the trunks and boxes. The sea-sick passengers got well from sheer excitement.

A quick last meal with no pretense at order, where oranges were served with the soup and no one noticed it, and then—the girl stood on the little tender, and the officer stood on the bridge, both with hearts that felt as uncomfortable and large as inflated foot-balls. Then the tender climbed into port and the steamer hurried on.

Now, it is a well-established fact that if you separate a man and a woman that have fallen in love, they will tend to come together again with the certainty of the two ends of a stretched india-rubber band. Always provided that you don't stretch the band too far, and leave it so too long, in which case the connection between the ends snaps.

As the officer had not had a chance to speak to the girl again after they had been drenched together, he did not know whether she intended to climb Alps in Switzerland, or buy hats in Paris. So for weeks, and in

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all kinds of weather, he stood on the bridge with the stretched india-rubber kind of feeling, while the ship swung back and forth between Europe and America like a huge pendulum.

The vessel, as you may have surmised from the foregoing, touched one port in America, and then swung back and touched at two in Europe.

This by way of explanation. Well, it had dropped the girl at the first European port, gone on to the second, returned to America, and then reached Europe again. This had used up about four weeks and much of the officer's cheerfulness.

Then something happened that had effect on his whole future existence. The company's agent, who came aboard at the first European port, brought along a fat, chunky little parcel, sent by mail, and addressed to the officer. The latter opened it and the "yes" flag dropped out. Nothing else, only the "yes" flag.

Then he studied the handwriting of the address and the envelope, and found a travel-

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weakened postmark of some little town in Switzerland in one corner. Love is said to be blind.

He was supposed to steer the vessel in a reasonably straight line from the first European port to the second; but that small parcel seemed to have an intoxicating effect on his mind, and was responsible for the steamer's going two points out of her course. Upon arrival, as soon as he possibly could, he applied for leave of absence, took a train, and hunted up the postmark.

This far I have given you facts. The rest, *i.e.*, the motives underlying them all and the final result, you and I must guess at together. Probably the girl, being repentant, had sent the flag back to quiet her conscience, and the officer, being nautical, had only grasped the nautical significance of the signal, and acted accordingly. That is the trouble of having one and the same flag mean two entirely different things.

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A GHOST-OF-A-GHOST STORY

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A GHOST-OF-A-GHOST STORY

It was the afternoon of the first day out —we had come aboard late the night before —and already the ship was in an uproar. Not from the waves; no, they were quiet and gentle, and listened to the commotion *inside* of the ship.

Somebody was missing! No one seemed to know exactly how, or when, or why.

On the second day the rumor crystallized and grew to a certainty, and we received details: A man with a black-pointed beard, five feet six inches, pepper and salt suit; husband of the pale little woman with the large eyes, who had instantly donned crape.

The crape seemed at first premature, for there were quite a number of chances of finding him somewhere about the ship.

When interrogated, the little woman gave the story, swamped in tears. Most of us got

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it second-hand, but dry, *i.e.*, without tears, for which we were duly thankful.

She exhibited his hat-box with a sort of "Cloak-of-the-Prophet" reverence, and weeping copiously, brought out his pipe stuffed ready for use. This latter object was strong circumstantial evidence that the man could not be far away, as no man stuffs a pipe and then leaves it, even though under peculiar circumstances he might be tempted to part from his wife for a season.

The matter was, of course, reported to the captain, and a cross-examination of the little, possible widow, brought out the whole personal history of the lost man.

He was not a total abstainer, nor was he ever known to have been under the influence of liquor. He was very handsome (here a sob accompanied the description) and dark, with a mole on the left cheek.

Regular searching parties were organized among the passengers and crew. The passengers found nothing, but the crew discovered two stowaways. Although they both claimed to be the husband of the lady in

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question, they were proved to be impostors.

The "find" had given a short respite to the searching parties, who now recommenced in earnest.

Mrs. Bhumgara, "the Widow," as we called her, naturally remained much in her cabin, and when she did come up late in the evening, heavily veiled, no one dared speak to her. From a subject of pity, she became an object of terror. The children ran to their mothers when the "Black Lady" appeared, and even the mothers were not anxious to trust themselves alone with her.

The next sensation was, that a *ghost* had been seen aboard. The searching parties were becoming monotonous, as there was nothing left to search through, so it was quite a relief that Bhumgara had at last been found, even though it was in ungraspable form.

A young lady who had come down from the deck one evening very late, had seen a white figure glide through the passage before her and disappear. After that, rap-

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pings and moanings were heard everywhere, even by those whose truthfulness could not be questioned. Even the widow confirmed the return in ethereal form of the departed; she grew more cheerful or rather less tearful, and added considerably to the notes on "Strange Personal Experiences" a Spiritualist, who happened to be on board, was gathering.

The children formed little ghost-story-telling clubs, and soon there were authentic tales of fiery eyes that had looked in through port-holes at night, and of long, white, bony arms that crawled in through the curtains when people were in their berths.

The ship's doctor laughed at the whole thing at first, but after a few days, when he had several cases of nervous prostration and hysterics on his hands, regarded the matter more seriously.

Women would no longer sit alone on deck after dark until bedtime. This at once threw consternation and confusion into the card-room, as most of the players were husbands.

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So Mr. Bhumgara's ghost stalked about through the ship, and supplied an otherwise quiet trip with an unlooked-for amount of excitement, from the steerage to the smoker. The captain, who was appealed to again as last resource, expressed himself more forcibly than elegantly, saying that he had never shipped a greater lot of d—— fools in one cargo in his life.

The stewards blamed broken glasses and smashed plates on the ghost, and the passengers rang their bells at night at the slightest unaccustomed noise for the ghost reason.

Besides Mrs. Bhumgara's husband's ghost, another and more tangible annoyance haunted the ship—her seven dogs—all spaniels, and all of the same size. It was rumored that they had a stateroom to themselves, and the ladies held an indignation meeting. Then it was discovered that the cabin belonged to the fourth mate, and that therefore no one but he would be likely in the future to suffer from the past presence of the dogs.

They broke out one time, all seven of

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them; that is, the dogs, and before they were found even the Bhumgara ghost sensation suffered. They were all recaught except one, who was at first supposed to have joined Bhumgara, but was afterward proved to have ventured too near the boilers.

When we landed no one was sorry to leave the ship haunted by Mr. Bhumgara's ghost and Mrs. Bhumgara's spaniels, and everyone made a mental memorandum of the fact that they would never cross in her again, for the traces of ghosts and spaniels cling to a ship.

The "dog-widow" herself had slipped away unnoticed, while the captain told his mate that he regretted not to have been able to say a few forcible and appropriate words to her before she left. "Fog's a bad thing," added the captain, "but I'll be d——d if a woman with the fidgets, a ghost-husband, and spaniels trailing in her wake isn't worse."

I had almost forgotten about this strange trip and its never-solved problem—it was

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three years ago—when last night a friend who had just returned from abroad called on me.

"Had a good trip?" I queried.

"As far as weather went, yes; but we had a ghost aboard."

"Indeed!" I said.

"Yes. A man got lost somewhere the first day out. His wife set the ship on ear with terrible surmises."

"Rappings and moanings?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Little woman, big eyes?" I continued.

"Yes, yes, man. What do you know about it? She must have been prepared for it, too, for she brought out crape immediately."

"Husband's hat-box and pipe?"

"Husband's hat-box and pipe!" he replied with his mouth wide open. "Yes!"

"Seven spaniels?" I asked.

"Seven pugs! But how on earth did you know?" he said.

"Because I crossed the ocean with that woman and with that woman's dogs, and

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with that woman's husband's ghost, pipe, and hat-box three years ago. Where is she now?" I asked.

"In a lunatic asylum," he replied, "locked up for keeps. Being a doctor, I was interested in the case and looked it up."

"And her husband? For if you had another ghost aboard she must have married again."

"Never had one, never will have one!" he said.

"What!" It was my turn to gasp. "Never had one? How about the ghost?"

"It was the *ghost of a ghost.*"

"And *that* set the whole ship agog! 'What fools we mortals be!'" I sighed.

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PETER

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PETER

PETER was one of those men who are neither good nor bad; just a mixture, in which sometimes one and sometimes the other was on top. The world is full of such men, and a great many of them go on ships. So did Peter; at first from choice and then from necessity.

Nobody knew his history if, indeed, he ever had one outside of a ship, which appeared doubtful. On land he was usually drunk while his money lasted, which was never more than two days after arrival; while at sea he led a semi-virtuous life, because, well, because it was absolutely impossible for him to do otherwise.

The good die young. Such men as Peter live on, as a rule, to a more than ripe age, like an over-ripe apple.

Beginning with sailing-vessels, he had

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gradually worked his way up through the ocean tramp to one of the large Atlantic liners. He had never been ambitious, or he would not now, at the age of fifty, have been content to plod as a common sailor. Age seemed to have steadied him slightly, for he had been on the same steamer now for several years.

Miss Severn was a young girl crossing the ocean for the first time, and the trip being very rough, she was naturally sea-sick. But she resolutely stayed on deck, which many others did not, and, lashed into her steamer chair, would watch Peter go through his duties, deck-scrubbing and rope-tarring, morning after morning.

They got to know each other quite well, but the first time they spoke was when a vicious toss of the ship threw the book from Miss Severn's lap to the sailor's feet.

She was sleeping, and he picked up the book and held it in his tarry hands for a few moments, before he decided whether he should wake her and hand it back. This showed he had a kind heart, but left several

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black marks on the delicate book-cover, which Miss Severn later on considered sacred. Such things do happen.

He crept up softly and tried to place it on the chair without waking her. But a man is clumsy, and a sea-sick girl's sense of hearing acute; and so just as he thought he had succeeded, she said, "Thank you."

He looked so robust and sailor-like that she envied him his health, and he in his turn wondered how comfortable it must be to lie in a steamer chair and have nothing to do. She said "good morning" and "good afternoon" and "good evening" to him after that.

One evening Miss Severn was standing alone, away back in the stern of the ship, looking up at the stars and wondering, well wondering about quite a number of things. A dark figure came up behind her, and before she knew it, she had cried out in fear. It was only Peter.

"I'm sorry I frightened you, Miss. There's a sort of story that's weighed on my mind ever since I saw you. I don't

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know why I should tell *you*, 'cause I don't think I've spoken to anyone about it for twenty years. I married long ago and, fool that I was, ran away from my wife and little girl. Guess they died; I never heard about them afterward. Would you forgive such a fellow as that?"

"Would *I* forgive?"

"Yes, I can't explain it all, but up in the mast there, when I've been watchin' the stars at night, I've seen her face and—and yours, Miss, and I've felt so strange and guilty—so guilty."

There was a heavy step behind him; an officer having heard Miss Severn's cry, had come up. Seeing Peter, he gruffly asked, "What are *you* doing here?"

"Nothing wrong," answered Peter curtly.

"Go back this instant," said the officer, "you insolent dog."

Peter clenched his fist as if to strike, then he looked at Miss Severn, bowed his head and walked off.

The next morning Peter did not appear on deck. He had been ordered to work in

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the engine-room. He was accustomed to the fresh ocean air, and the temperature of the place he was ordered to was somewhat over one hundred degrees. The officer knew that.

Just after luncheon that day there was a dull thud in the hold. Then there came crashing and the hiss of escaping steam. Some piston or rod or crank had had a flaw, and the flaw had at last found its way to the surface, and set pieces of steel flying about in an irresponsible sort of way, smashing everything within reach, and at each turn of the shaft tearing holes into places that, of all others, should be kept water-tight if the ship was intended to remain afloat.

The officers who rushed to the spot knew this, so did the trembling men who had hurried terror-stricken from the surrounding rooms. Peter was among them.

"Some one turn off steam valve 2," called an officer. "Quick, men—Mason—it's life or death to the ship!"

"Might as well order a man off to hell at once," growled the man addressed with-

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out moving. The head engineer had arrived.

"Isn't there one among you brave enough to save the ship? I'll go myself," and he was about to enter the seething compartment.

Peter suddenly stepped up.

"Let *me* go, sir! Your life' svaluable; mine ain't worth a damn. I know where the valve is." With that he darted off and was lost in the scalding, blinding cloud.

A moment of suspense, and then the hissing and the crashing stopped.

They took him out a few minutes later and revived him, just long enough to tell him that by his brave deed he had saved the ship. Then he asked for ice, and while some one ran to bring it, he pulled off a much worn gold ring with a small bluish stone, and asked them to give it to Miss Severn. Then he died.

No one could tell why Miss Severn should have burst out crying when they told her of Peter's death and gave her the ring.

The curious thing about that ring was that

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it looked exactly like one that Miss Severn was wearing, even to the little cross, cut under the small turquoise, even the date engraved under the cross. *Her* ring had been given her by her mother long, long ago.

And that night she stood again at the stern of the ship, and watched the big brilliant stars. She held the book on whose delicate cover were black marks.

Perhaps she cried so because a brave man had saved the ship and died; perhaps—but there are so many strange things that happen in this world of ours.

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"AND WHILE WE FRET ON SHORE"

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"AND WHILE WE FRET ON SHORE"

"My God! My God, what shall I do? He is aboard! Is there no hope? No hope?"

The old man's grief was piteous, but he was not alone. There stood behind him a long line, a line of white faces; a line of faces where eyes were deep-set and red from watching and weeping, all there to ask over and over again that question about the coming of the steamer, now six days overdue.

"I am sorry," said the clerk.

"Sorry! Sorry!" almost shrieked the old man. "You—you have no son aboard—you do not know what it means to suffer this dreadful uncertainty, this hell on earth——"

"But *I* do," said a voice behind him, as he gasped for breath, and fell back almost

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exhausted. "My only sister is on board. Come, sir, we will not give up hope!"

"I cannot lose my—only—son," cried the old man, while tears rolled down his cheeks.

The young man supported him to a bench.

"Would it not be better, sir, if we were to go home?" he said quietly. "We can do no good here, and they will send for us if——"

"My carriage is outside," the old man spoke with a voice calmed by exhaustion, "and yet I dare not trust myself alone. Would you—would you accompany me? Or—listen—I have promised my doctor to be home again in less than two hours. You stay here and watch, and if—if you hear any news come to me. At six to-night come to me, whether you have news or not. Here is my address." He handed the young man a card:

"MR. LAIDLAW LYNDRED,
—— West 57th Str."

Another day of terrible suspense had begun for those who waited for tidings from

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their loved ones. The minutes seemed hours, the hours ages.

Another steamer was due that day; she might bring news, good or bad, from the missing one. And so they clung to hope, waiting, waiting.

The other steamer arrived late in the afternoon, but she brought no tidings. The clerks in the office lit the lamps and worked on for an hour, booking new people for the treacherous sea.

At last the hour struck for their dismissal, and with a sigh of relief they escaped to their homes.

The young man who had waited patiently through the day, remembered the promise he had made, and hurried to the house indicated on the card.

He was well dressed, and yet there was a look of economy about him, the economy of the man who saves on his meals and on the cut of his coat, to obtain something more precious for himself or—for someone else.

The jingle of the door-bell brought a liveried footman to the door. The young man

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entered the richly carpeted hall, lit dimly by the lamp which the great angel held over his head at the foot of the staircase. There was the stillness of Death; nay, worse, the stillness of Uncertainty hovering over the house, and the servant spoke almost in a whisper.

"Master said would you come right up to his sitting-room? The doctor is with him."

Harry Parsons, that was the young man's name, mounted the staircase, and at the head found the doctor just coming down.

"You must be careful what you tell him," said the doctor. "I will be back to-morrow; he is very weak."

After half an hour had passed Mr. Lyndred and Harry Parsons each knew the other's history. Harry Parsons knew that Mr. Lyndred's only son, who had been studying art for two years abroad, was on the ill-fated steamer; and Mr. Lyndred discovered that Harry Parsons's eighteen-year-old sister, the only legacy his artist-father had left Harry, was coming home to him again. In telling

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of them they quite forgot that sister and son might for days be dead.

The calling of the newsboys in the street brought back the terrible reality, and sent Harry scampering to the sidewalk.

It was only a heartless, cruel "extra," issued to inform the public that the ship was now seven days overdue.

All night Harry watched at the bedside of the old man without sleep and rest, and when the morning stole gray and sullen through the windows, he slipped quietly away.

Slowly again the day crept on. When he returned at night the doctor once more met him at the door, and told him that unless he had some news, some hope, the old man must die that night.

So Harry lied. He told of broken shaft and "steamer spoken five hundred miles away," and then softly withdrew and left the old man on his knees at the bedside thanking God.

At half-past three in the morning there was a tug at the door-bell that started Harry

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from the chair into which he had sunk exhausted. It was a telegram. For a moment he trembled, then tore it open.

Only a few words, but words that wrung prayers of thanksgiving from lips that had been closed in despair.

"Steamer sighted. Expected to be at her dock about nine o'clock."

Slowly she steamed up the bay, with her bows stove in, with the foremast gone, like a huge, wounded monster, like a hero coming battle-scarred from a great struggle.

The vessels in the harbor greeted their long-lost comrade with shrieks and shouts of joy. Every whistle, every voice welcomed her coming home. It was a grand, great sight, with gay flags flying to the wind.

And Mr. Lyndred? He was standing foremost in the mass of people, had been standing there since the sun rose, waiting, watching for his boy.

The scenes that followed as the vessel came slowly to her dock were scenes of wild confusion. Men and women laughed and cried by turns.

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When the first great tumult of joy had calmed, Harry's sister whispered something to him and then blushed. And at that moment old Mr. Lyndred came up to them on the arm of his tall, handsome son, and kissed the pretty girl.

They say that all things happen for the good of some. Perhaps 'tis so. Perhaps 'tis so.

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THE PROFESSOR

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THE PROFESSOR

"MR. J. THORLAGH VAN SNOOTEN"—thus his name was engraved on his visiting card. The "J." stood for John; that was why he avoided it and adopted the sonorous Thorlagh, which suggested indefinite greatness.

Mr. J. Thorlagh Van Snooten was an artist; that is, he himself and everyone in the family, except his father and brother, thought he was an artist, for he painted much and fast. He also held strange ideas of the incapability of woman, as such men often will. It was to cure him of both afflictions that his father decided to send him abroad.

Thorlagh had never in his life been in the slightest trouble. Every action had always been carefully planned and considered for him. He had never travelled. His satchel, fitted out with silver-topped scent-bottles,

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and monogrammed brushes, would have betrayed at once to the experienced traveller that its owner was as innocent of the wicked ways of the world as a humming-bird. Thorlagh, although not a Catholic, held the theory of infallibility—about himself. He was going to prove to the world at large, and to his sceptical brother in particular, that a great artist need not necessarily pass through life begrimed with yellow ochre and steeped in turpentine. When such a man, with a super-educated, self-sufficient mind, is cast for the first time from the nest, he is bound to get into difficulty, and it is only the first innocent incident I wish to relate.

It means much to a man who has travelled little, who his travelling companions are. The prospect of being wedged for seven nights and possibly as many days into a pitching, tossing room half the size of a billiard-table with a strange man, was a nightmare to poor, over-sensitive Thorlagh.

His room-mate, as he learned by the company's books, was to be a professor. But even this did not quiet his apprehension.

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He himself had once known a professor who buttoned on a false, stiff shirt front to a negligé shirt, and who cared no more for the fit of his clothes than other people for the traditional row of pins.

The steamer was scheduled to sail at nine o'clock in the morning, and when Thorlagh arrived, long before the appointed time, he found the professor's hand-bags already carefully posed in their mutual state room. Their neat appearance partially reassured him. The "Professor" was carefully inscribed on every possible place, showing that whoever the individual might be, at any rate he had a due appreciation of the title.

Not a piece of Thorlagh's luggage—he always insisted on calling it "luggage"—bore his name, only the initials. He held that it was vulgar to introduce one's self, so to speak, to the world at large.

Thorlagh climbed on deck to bid a last good-by to the family, and told them that if circumstantial evidence could be relied upon, the as yet unknown professor might prove a passable room-mate.

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A few minutes later the great ship slowly moved from the land, carrying off and away from home the good and the bad, wise men and fools, professors and J. Thorlagh Van Snooten.

Top-heavy New York, with hurry, worry, and enterprise buzzing from every crevice and street-cañon, slowly faded away. The passengers pocketed their handkerchiefs with which they had waved a last farewell to friends on shore; the stewards took up the red carpets that had been laid in the narrow passages to produce a holiday effect; the captain rang for "full speed ahead," and the ship leaped on as if glad once more to reach the waters of the Atlantic.

Thorlagh, who had been lost in a brown study, found that he was alone on deck, and for the first time in his life realized what being alone meant. The strict code of etiquette from which he never departed, forbade him to speak to a total stranger without sufficient reason. The only passenger whom he felt justified in addressing was the professor. As yet undiscovered, the latter

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assumed more and more definite proportions in Thorlagh's mind. But where was he? What was he like in reality?

The stewards could give him no information, for the time had been too short even for the stewards to acquire the names and innermost secrets of the passengers. They had, indeed, already formed conclusions, based on instinct, as to whom it would be wise to serve most, but it seemed that the professor had escaped their notice entirely.

He was not in the stateroom. His baggage once carefully deposited therein, apparently ended his sojourn there.

So Thorlagh wandered about the ship, growing more and more lonely. The minutes seemed hours to him, and the hours days. To make matters worse, the wind "freshened" and the vessel started a wild dance, and when four bells rang, which meant supper, the great J. Thorlagh lay a confused, helpless mass in a steamer chair, with no desire in life but to die.

The evening passed. One by one the people around him went to bed, and at last

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he was again alone on deck. With a mighty effort he pulled himself together and started for his stateroom. Suddenly it flashed upon him that now for the first time would he behold the professor, and the professor would behold him. Bitter thought! In his present condition Thorlagh was not good to look upon, and he realized it. The next moment he cared neither for appearance nor for professor; his only desire was to lie down and sleep.

At last he had reached his cabin No. 97. The curtain had been drawn across the opening. Thorlagh pulled it aside softly and entered. There was hardly a ray of light in the little room. Evidently the professor had gone to bed, for Thorlagh in groping about felt that the curtain was closed over the lower berth. The ladder for the upper one hung in position.

He felt a sudden impulse to tear open the curtain of the lower berth, and look upon the face of the man he had sought in vain all day. But at that moment the vessel rode the crest of a wave, and the next dropped

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into the valley of another. Again and again it rose and fell, for the tossings of the ocean go by threes. Then all was quiet once more, save for the gentle snoring of the professor.

But Thorlagh no longer possessed the feeling of curiosity. He felt an imperative necessity of lying down, of getting his head low down upon a pillow. Thirty seconds later Mr. J. Thorlagh Van Snooten lay in the upper berth, dressed, capped and booted, a sad example of how even the great are conquered and subdued by the force of circumstances.

The next morning dawned, and the sun shone with a bright glare through the port-hole of No. 97, right upon the closed eyes of Thorlagh. The eyes opened and looked about with a half-awake, confused stare. Slowly there crept into them recognition of surroundings. Slowly they wandered over the shoes on his feet, the night-crumpled suit on his body. Then they strayed over the ceiling, through the port-hole over the sea, and then—he gasped and attempted to

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sit bolt upright, but hit his head a sharp rap against the ceiling. There, on the red-cushioned sofa, opposite the berths, lay the habiliments, full and entire, of a woman.

Thorlagh pinched his right ear. The dress still lay there. He bit his lip—not one of the carefully folded articles had faded away. It was then no hallucination, no nightmare; the professor was—a woman.

He had always fought against co-education. His present unenviable predicament placed the climax to his convictions. He, J. Thorlagh Van Snooten, had been calmly reposing in an upper berth, while in the lower one there had been equally calmly reposing a female "professor"!

Oh, the shame of it! Not only that, but the indignity of it to him, to him of all men.

Suppose the unsuspecting professor should discover him and scream. That would alarm the ship. Horrible thought!

To get up now would surely wake the occupant below. There was but one thing to do, to lie still, allow the "professor" to leave

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the stateroom first, and then escape. He was fully dressed, thanks to the sea-sickness of the night before. So he drew the curtains over his berth softly and waited, waited like a criminal to fly.

I will finish in Thorlagh's own words:

"I lay there waiting for six months, at least it seemed six months, until she had dressed and left the stateroom.

"There was no sign of my luggage anywhere about, so the 'professor' could not have had any idea of my presence. And I took good care she never found it out."

Mr. J. Thorlagh Van Snooten is at present a violent opponent to the system of co-education, and he gives various reasons, but never the true one, to anyone who may interview him on the subject.

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REVERY OF A BACHELOR
STEAMER CHAIR

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REVERY OF A BACHELOR STEAMER CHAIR

THE stern of the steamer, where I am lying alone in my steamer chair, is going through the motions incident to the manufacture of milk-punch; and every time the deck and my steamer chair drop a distance of twenty feet with a thump, I envy the gulls which have followed us and are hovering around, their slow and majestic sweeps.

I am a bachelor, and therefore have nothing to worry me and no one to look out for.

That is a fallacy!

My stateroom companion, a fat, ugly-dispositioned youth, who has taken every meal so far in bed, has just informed me that he is going to die. I hope for the best, but I am afraid that he will live through the voyage, and go on making me his body-servant every instant I remain in the stateroom. The trip is still young, but my cabin, thanks

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to the individual above mentioned, gives a daring illustration of chaos.

The individual is not the only one who troubles me. A rich old lady in the next cabin is travelling without a nurse to save money. Both mornings as I passed her door she has called to me, and insisted on my leading her on deck. As she has a cork foot, or some other disease of a similar nature, this leading—"carrying" would be more correct—consumes at least ten minutes, during which time she lectures to me on temperance. She seems to take it as a personal affront that I am well. Then she launches forth into a criticism of ship-building, saying that it is absurd for the engineers to go on shortening an ocean voyage by cutting days off the *end* of the trip. She is waiting for a genius to eliminate the *first* three days. By this time we have reached the deck, and she remembers that she has forgotten something in her stateroom. Of course I have to go after it.

In the cabin opposite there lives one mother with two youngsters. The young-

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sters play marbles in the passageway during the day and yell during the night. The mother is pitifully sea-sick both day and night. The first morning when I came down again to get a handkerchief the old lady had forgotten, I was inveigled into carrying the children on deck. Since then I have in some quarters enjoyed the reputation of a man of family, and have overheard some ladies say, "Wonder why the father of those children spends so little time with them." I am certain they meant me because, not knowing that I was within earshot, they gave a most unflattering description of my steamer cap. The cap has accompanied me on all my trips for years, and I would as soon think of parting with it as I would think of parting with one of my eye-teeth.

There is one more stateroom, diagonally across from mine, from which proceed groans. I have not the slightest desire to become acquainted with its contents, and have thus far escaped.

Is it strange that I have moved my steamer

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chair as far back as the geography of the ship will allow ?

Everyone tells me that a bachelor leads an absolutely useless and sorrowless life, especially on board ship. It is not so. Unless he is morally depraved, every man, woman, and child on the ship will put him to some use.

We have been blessed with twins in the steerage. One weighs three pounds, and its mate three pounds six ounces. I have not the faintest doubt that before long somebody will suggest my adopting one of them.

Every married woman seems to have an aversion to a bachelor. One told me to my face that she despised single men, and that it was so nice to see me attentive to my children. This was yesterday, just after I carried the youngsters on deck.

Now there is Jack Leland, a *bona-fide* husband with a wife and a baby. When we came aboard together he had my sincere sympathy for not being able to travel alone. I never made a greater mistake. Everyone takes it for granted that he cannot care for

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anyone but his wife and child, and he takes it for granted that that is what he hired the ocean-acclimated nurse for. This leaves him fancy and duty free.

Some of the gulls at this moment are mocking me. By their number they are making me feel lonely.

"What a fool he is to travel through the world alone!" caws one.

"Perhaps no one would have him," shrieks another.

"Perhaps he hasn't tried," sneers a third, and swoops down into the spray.

"Either way he's a fool," caws the first again. The sun is setting now directly astern. Above, the clouds are blood-red. Below, their pictured counterpart looks up through the ocean. Every instant the spray of the propeller flies up in a sheet, and the red disk of the setting sun is hidden behind a veil of golden, glittering pearls.

Is is not grand? Is it not? Whom am I talking to? I am alone. There is no one to share the grandeur with me. Oh, lucky Jack! How now I envy you that

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sweet companionship that makes happiness the happier, and sorrow, when it comes, less keen!

Ss-ss—wi-sh-sh-sh!

A wave has swept over the stern and drenched me to the bone. And as it drips back whence it came, it takes with it poetry, and sentiment, and all, and leaves me freezing in my chair.

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MR. AND MRS. MILFORD

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MR. AND MRS. MILFORD

I.

"WASN'T the duel-scene grand?" she said, as they stepped from the brilliantly lighted theatre into the dark street. Her cheeks were burning with excitement.

He looked at her earnestly and drew her arm more tightly through his. "See," he said, pointing down the long street. In the distance inky-black factory chimneys were silhouetted against the sky, tongues of flame belching from each one. "While we have been watching the play, real men have been feeding the fires with coal and with—their lives."

A troubled look came into her eyes. "Why do you always think of the men and never of me. You seem so great and——"

"Unromantic?" he finished, smiling.

"Think of the olden times when men fought and died for women," she went on.

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"Men fight and die for women still, my little wife. Not with sword and armor, but just as hard, just as hard."

At this moment a man passed them. "Good evening."

"Oh, Mr. Stephane!" said Mrs. Milford, drawing her hand from her husband's arm. "Where do *you* come from?"

"The play. And you?"

"We were there too. Wasn't it fine? Perfectly fine!" said Mrs. Milford.

"Yes," answered Stephane. "I think I was born a century too late. I wish I had lived in those chivalrous times."

"And I, too," she cried joyously.

Milford had not spoken yet. The three walked on a few moments in silence.

"I heard you had raised your workmen's wages again," at last said Stephane.

"Where did you hear that?" questioned Milford.

"At Mr. Zelons'. He always talks while I paint his portrait. It was foolish, he said."

"That is my affair, not his."

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"And I have also heard," continued Stephane, "that you and Mrs. Milford are going abroad for a few months."

"At Mr. Zelons', too?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Zelons keeps himself well informed as to my affairs," said Milford.

"Well, I must be off," said Stephane suddenly, "so I will bid you good night." He disappeared, and the Milfords walked on.

"He is always so bright and pleasant. I shall never forget the evening he proposed to me and I refused him and—accepted you an hour later. Few men would treat a woman so cordially after such an experience."

"Yes, few men," repeated Milford. "Have a care of him, Amy. You have accepted his attentions far too often lately."

"And to what harm?"

"None yet."

"You do not like him?"

"No."

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II.

Two weeks later found the Milfords aboard an ocean steamer. Mr. Stephane and Mr. Zelons had for some reason decided that they, too, would take a trip across the Atlantic, and curiously enough had chosen the same ship.

It was only natural that in the small compass of the steamer's dimensions Mrs. Milford and Stephane should be thrown together a great deal. A thousand and one little opportunities presented themselves where the latter could show himself an attentive cavalier.

"You tuck me into my steamer chair better than anyone else," she said to Stephane one afternoon. Her husband, who, for more than ten minutes, had tried in vain to make her comfortable, stepped aside while Stephane arranged the shawls.

"Mr. Stephane always brings me such pretty things from the table," she said to Milford; "and you, you never think of bringing me anything."

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Day by day the attentions of Stephane became more marked, and day by day Milford's look grew more serious when his wife mentioned Stephane's name. Then the moment arrived when Milford told her kindly, but firmly, that the growing intimacy must cease. It was early in the morning, and as they stood together on the swaying deck, the ship seemed a plaything of the mountainous waves.

"Dear me," she sighed when he had finished, "I wish I had my freedom back! Why did I ever get married?"

"Amy!"

"Yes, I mean it. I don't always want to be dictated to and protected—*protected*—protected! I need no help, no protection. There's where you men make a great mistake. You—you go anywhere, do everything, and we——"

"Amy, what do you mean?"

"You men can sit with women, talk with women—any women, and we poor wives must have *our* friends chosen for us, doled out to us like children, by our husbands.

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If the men we care to see are milk-sops, fools, imbeciles, well and good, our lords permit it. If they are men of the world, as you yourself are, we wives dare not so much as look at them. We are fettered, you are free."

"I have never heard you speak like that before, my dear."

"I have never had reason to."

"And what reason have I given you now?" His voice had become hard and stern.

"It is the ship's talk that you command me like a slave, and in the meanwhile you yourself go about with——"

"Stop!" he said, bringing down his clenched fist on the railing. "The next word might be an insult I could never forgive even from you. There is only one person on this ship who would try to injure me in your eyes like this. And you—you dare to believe his tales, his slander, his damnable lies. Let it be so. You shall be free to do as you like. I shall not trouble you with advice. Try it, child——"

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"Child again—always child, never wife."

He looked at her a few seconds. Then he held out his hand to her, "Amy."

Perhaps she did not see him, for she did not move, but stared motionless out at the sea. Then she said slowly, "You have offered me my way. I shall take it."

He drew back his hand as if he had been stung.

For the next few moments he stood as one in a trance. He saw her slowly going away, and yet he could not stir or speak. Unnoticed the spray washed over, every now and then, and the vessel dug her bows deeper and deeper with every wave.

Time slipped by. Few people had remained on deck, for it had become very rough. An officer going to his watch on the bridge saw Milford standing at the railing, bare-headed, his hair tumbled about by the gale, his whole figure dripping, immovable, staring into space.

The officer walked up, and touched him on the arm. "What are you standing here for, Mr. Milford; are you ill? You had

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better go below. Your wife almost had an ugly fall going down-stairs."

Milford started. "My wife—she—she wasn't hurt? I'll go at once. How careless of me to let her walk about alone in this weather!"

The officer held him back. "Don't be alarmed," he said, "she was not hurt at all. Mr. Stephane was just coming up the stairs and caught her as she slipped."

Milford bit his lip. "I will go and find her," he said.

He must have looked strange, for several people in the deck cabin moved out of his way and whispered as he went by. When he reached the head of the stairs he heard laughter below—Stephane's voice. The few steps down seemed endless, and the ship was lurching so that he had to clutch the baluster to keep from falling. She must surely be in her stateroom now.

He felt so lonely, but then a few moments would bring him to her, and then all would be explained, and the words they had both spoken in haste and passion would be wiped

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out and forgotten. He was now on the bottom step, and again the loud, vulgar laughter of Stephane grated on his ears. He looked up and saw Amy and Stephane sitting together at a table. The floor seemed to sink away; he stumbled and then was on his feet again. The noise attracted their attention. Milford's eyes met those of his wife, then he staggered like a drunken man toward the door.

Mrs. Milford rose, but Stephane made her resume her seat. At that moment the steward arrived with two steaming glasses of hot punch.

"I must go," she said.

"One moment. Take the punch and then you shall go." Again she tried to leave, and again, with some excuse, he held her back. At last she hurried to the stateroom. There was no trace of her husband.

Outside in the passage she heard footsteps. Perhaps it was he. She stepped to the door and opened it. Before her, with a smile, stood Stephane. She shrank

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back. "What do you want?" she asked huskily.

Stephane smiled. "I came to see whether I could—comfort you."

"You—would not have *dared* to come to my room if——"

"If your husband were here? Probably not. But your husband is *not* here. I saw him walking down the passage just now, and he looked like a corpse. You did right; it is good medicine for such as he."

While he spoke she stood motionless, indignation burning in her eyes. "You *dare* speak like that of my husband!"

"Dare? Have you not told me yourself all this and more?" He moved as if to step into the room.

"Leave me this minute or I'll ring for the steward." She was trembling.

"For help? Afraid of *me?* So that's the tone you're taking now, my fine lady, is it? You've played with me, have you, you've——" The door was flung to in his face. He stepped back with an oath. "I'll make you both pay for that," he muttered.

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III.

"*Eh bien!*" said Zelons when he met Stephane after luncheon. "How has your little matter gone?"

Stephane waited a moment before he answered carelessly: "I felt so sure of my bird that I've sprung the trap too soon. She slammed the door in my face!"

"Impossible!"

"Yes, that's what I would have said a day ago, the way she talked to me then. It seems that what I took for encouragement was sublimely stupid innocence on her part."

"Ha! And what are you going to do? Seems to me you have made a mess of the object of your trip."

"I believe I have a plan that *will* work. Where will you be in about five minutes?"

"Here with my cigar. What are you going to do?"

Without answering, Stephane had walked off. In a few moments he returned with an envelope.

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"Perhaps you will answer my question now," said Zelons. "It was damned impolite the way you ran off just now."

"Listen." Stephane drew a note from the envelope and read:

"MY DEAR MRS. MILFORD: Unless you apologize to me at once I shall go directly to your husband.

"Your obedient servant,

"BERGAL STEPHANE."

"I don't see how that will help matters any," said Zelons, shrugging his shoulders.

"Of course not, you good-natured, dull-witted cow," replied Stephane, patting Zelons on the shoulder. "She will answer this."

"She'll send it back to you unopened; that's what she will do."

"Trust me for that," continued Stephane. "You see it is not addressed, so there is no handwriting to show from whom it comes. For all she knows it *may* come from her

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husband. When it is opened, it is read. She will send me some sort of reply."

"Still," put in Zelons, puffing at the last third of his cigar, "even a reply won't arrange a duel."

"I shall use the answer in any way that may appear proper when I get it. It will at any rate offer me a chance for an interview with Milford. And after that I'll lay you odds he'll fight the duel."

"I don't believe he has ever had a pistol in his hand, and you are a famous shot, Stephane."

"So much the worse for him," said Stephane, and walked away.

So it happened that a little later a stewardess knocked at Mrs. Milford's door. Poor Amy was completely prostrated. The last few hours had shown her what she had done, and what she might expect from now on. Shielded by her husband, not even Stephane had dared to approach her.

"A letter, madam," said the stewardess.

She jumped up eagerly. Perhaps the let-

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ter came from her husband. Oh, if he would only once more hold out his hand to her! "From whom?" she asked.

"I don't know, madam; the steward gave it to me."

She took the envelope. There was no address. Nervously she tore it open. "There is no answer," she said excitedly.

"The steward said I should be sure, madam, to wait for an answer."

For a moment Amy stood, not knowing what to do. Then she took a pencil and wrote across the letter two words: "You coward." There was a blue envelope in her satchel, and she quickly snatched it up and sealed the letter.

"Shall I give the letter to the steward, madam?"

"No. Wait. Take it to the man himself. I want it to reach its destination."

"Bergal Stephane," she wrote in a bold hand across the envelope. "There, take it now. There is *no* answer to *my* note."

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IV.

It was a dreary day and passed slowly for everyone on board. Evening came and still Milford was wandering about aimlessly, hardly knowing what he was doing. A door, opening and shutting as the ship rolled from one side to the other, struck him just as he passed. He entered and found himself in the library and writing-room. It was deserted. He flung himself into one of the chairs, resting his elbows on the desk before him, and buried his face in his hands. What had he done that she should treat him so?

The door to the room went on swinging to and fro, every time with a crash, but he did not hear it. He did not even notice that suddenly the door stopped crashing, for some one had entered and closed it softly.

The last comer stood with his arms folded and, with a curious leer of satisfaction, watched the mental agony of the man sitting at the desk. Stephane—it was he—waited

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there immovable for several minutes. "Are you writing letters?" he said at last.

"What do you want of me?" asked Milford.

"Milford, there's a disagreeable piece of business I want to settle with you. Some lies have been circulated about me on this ship."

"Well!"

"They have been circulated by your wife."

"That's not so!" and Milford's clenched fist fell heavily upon the desk.

"You have upset the ink," said Stephane with a sarcastic smile. "But in spite of your feigned anger and surprise it *is* so, and I look to *you* for redress.

"You scoundrel!"

"Ah, that sounds ugly!" sneered Stephane. "Keep your temper, and don't make so much noise. I wouldn't for the world have an audience. So before you get more excited and draw the rest of the passengers here, I will hand you a letter. It is written by your wife, unopened and addressed to me."

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"You lie. You have no letter from my wife."

"You *dare* call me a liar?"

"Yes, I dare. And I repeat it. You have no letter from my wife."

"And if I show it to you!" Stephane hissed out each word slowly and deliberately.

"You would have to answer for it with your life."

"You mean you *challenge* me?"

"Yes."

"I accept your challenge, Milford. To-morrow morning at sunrise. And I choose pistols. There's the letter." Stephane flung down the unopened blue envelope at Milford's feet and left the cabin.

V.

It was two o'clock in the morning now. Milford was pacing the deck alone, and although the wind was cold and stinging, there were beads of perspiration on his forehead. There could be but one outcome to

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the duel in the morning. Stephane, a practised duellist and certain shot, feared even in Paris, and he, Milford, with absolutely no knowledge of firearms. He did not fear for himself. It was for his wife. If he were gone—pshaw! he had been as powerless to shield her against herself, against her own folly, as if he were dead.

He smiled grimly as he thought how peacefully Stephane was at this moment sleeping, how sure of the morrow. Only now did Milford understand the skillful game of human chess that Stephane had been playing, and how to-night he had bidden "check" to the "King" and "Queen" at the same time.

The letter; Milford had almost forgotten that. He took it from his pocket. It was still sealed. Should he open it? No, a thousand times no, it would mean that he mistrusted his wife. He had never yet mistrusted her, he would not now. Perhaps he was a fool, perhaps—what difference would it make? In the morning he would give her the letter and show her how he trusted

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her, beyond all proof, beyond all reason. The morning? The sail flapped sharply overhead like the crack of a pistol and brought him back from his mind-wandering.

The ship's bell rang: one-two—three-four—five. Half-past two o'clock.

A sailor passed, the man who had rung the bell. "Can I get you anything, sir?" he said.

"No, thank you. I am not well, and will spend the night in the smoking-room."

The sailor went off puzzled, and looked back once or twice, until he had made sure that Milford had gone inside.

He threw himself upon the sofa of the now deserted smoking-room, and lay with wide-open eyes. The vessel rolled, and every now and then a wave would swish by the port-hole, one of them so forcibly that it pushed the glass aside and drenched him. He shivered, but it did not waken him from his stupor. His eyes were heavy and the lids closed. A woman seemed to stand before him, his wife, and in her hand she seemed to hold a letter and to mock him

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with it. And then a man, a pistol in his right hand, slowly aiming at the woman. He could see the shining pistol barrel pointing at her. With a superhuman effort he threw himself forward to protect her. A crash, the sting of the bullet in the back of the neck, and he awoke.

The satchel upon which he had placed his head had slipped, and in falling he had struck the edge of the sofa. He put the satchel back under his head; it was heavy as lead, and from sheer mental exhaustion fell into another sleep.

One ghastly dream chased another through the night, until at last a knock at the door roused him from his nightmare.

"Monsieur! Monsieur! The sun goes to rise in half an hour. We are ready."

Milford rubbed his eyes. "What do you mean? I left no order to be waked. I——" and then all at once he remembered. Long ago he had read in the papers of executions when the prison warden enters and wakes the victim on the fatal morning, and bids him come.

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"If monsieur vill be so kind as to come, Monsieur Stephane is already on ze deck," said the little Frenchman.

"Monsieur seems in a hurry to kill me," and Milford grimly smiled.

"*Une affaire d'honneur* one should always be in a hurry," said the Frenchman, bowing. "Vere is monsieur's second?"

"Second? Oh yes, of course. I forgot about a second. It was so impromptu." A feeling of acting a part in a grim tragedy came over Milford. He was himself, and yet he was not himself.

"*Mais, monsieur, c'est absolument nécessaire.*"

"Well, are you Stephane's second?"

"*Non, monsieur.*"

"Then will you be mine?"

"*Ah mais.* If monsieur desires it. But it is not ze code of ze duel."

"Come," said Milford. "I don't believe that Stephane will split hairs about seconds."

By this time he had thrown on his coat, and the two crept noiselessly across the deck.

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First Milford, tired, dishevelled, with sunken eyes, then the little Frenchman, with not a detail of his dress omitted.

Stephane and his second, Monsieur Zelons, were waiting, leaning negligently against the railing. As he heard the approaching steps, Zelons turned, but Stephane remained with his back toward the comers.

The dark figure of a sailor approached. "Good morning, gentlemen. You are up early," he said.

Stephane quickly turned. "Yes, we are watching the sun rise," he answered calmly.

"Then you're watching the sun rise on the wrong side, sir, for it rises in the east and not the west."

"Why, so it does; what fools we are!" returned Stephane, and the sailor went off chuckling at the stupidity of "landlubbers."

"There is no time to lose now," continued Stephane. "Where is your second?"

"I have ze honor. Mr. Stephane, it is against ze code." The little Frenchman bowed.

"Damn the code!" said Stephane. "I

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suppose your principal has said his prayers?" he added sneeringly.

"Vill ze gentlemen approach or say a word to each ozer?" The little Frenchman felt himself very important.

"We will dispense with all formalities. The sooner the thing is over the better," answered Stephane, with a look of hatred at Milford.

After a short consultation the seconds returned.

"Messieurs vill stand *à travers* ze vessel, so ze stray bullets vill go into ze vater."

Stephane smiled contemptuously. "My bullet will not go into the water, at least not alone."

The morning was a stormy one; the wind moaned through the rigging, and being from ahead, a pistol shot could not be heard on the main deck nor on the bridge.

No more time was taken for preparation. The men were placed in position, back to back. Six steps brought each to his side of the vessel. "One—two——" A shot rang out, and Milford fell heavily to the deck,

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his pistol undischarged, tightly clutched in his hand.

"*Mon Dieu!* This is murder! What have you done?" wildly shouted Zelons, rushing up to Stephane, who stood as in a trance.

Owing to the storm and noise of the water, none of the ship's officers or crew had heard the report of the pistol. Besides, the entire occurrence had only taken a few minutes.

The ship's doctor was hurriedly summoned, and Milford was carried to the doctor's room and laid on the floor, his head propped up with pillows.

Slowly he regained consciousness. "Doctor," he said faintly, "I suppose it is up with me?"

"Oh, no, old man, you'll be all right; but if you move I can't answer for you."

"Will you call my wife? I must see her once more. And, doctor, if she asks, the reason was cards—cards."

The doctor hastened out and Milford was alone. Curious how clear his mind had

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suddenly become. He could distinguish every object in the cabin. There hung his cap, his coat, and—great Heaven !—beneath it, fallen from the pocket lay the blue, crumpled, unopened letter. "If you move——" But how could he lie there and wait her coming, while the letter stared at him and would betray the reason of the duel at a glance? No, no, she should not find it there to accuse her.

Slowly he tried to move and could not. Every muscle seemed paralyzed. There were voices in the passageway coming nearer; only a few seconds left to reach the letter. Once more he struggled against the terrible helplessness that had seized him. With a great effort he lifted himself up and crept toward the letter on the floor. Somewhere he found a match and struck it and held it to the envelope. The flame touched the corner of the paper, a thousand flames played before his eyes, and again he fell face forward while the blood, starting afresh from the wound in his head, slowly crept through the bandage.

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At that moment came his wife. She did not cry out or faint. The doctor had somewhat prepared her, but not for what she now saw. The little flame on the still burning match was licking hungrily at one corner of the letter, but could not burn it. One glance, and she guessed all.

For three days and nights she remained by his bedside, and would not hear of leaving him, and all the while he tossed about restlessly in the fever. With his hand tightly clutching hers, he cried for her, and every moan was coupled with her name.

On the fourth morning the doctor, a kindly old man, came, and found her as usual watching at her husband's side. The fever had left him for the first time, and he had sunk back into the cushions utterly exhausted. For a few moments the doctor studied the pale face intently, then with gentle force he drew Amy from the bedside.

"He may live, child, if you nurse him carefully."

She had not cried before this. Now she broke down and sobbed. "Doctor, for

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three days and nights I have prayed on my knees for one more chance to show him how I love him."

A slight noise from the couch made the doctor turn. Milford lay with open eyes. There was a faint smile of recognition on his face.

"I will live," he murmured.

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